

Office of Transition Initiatives

Advancing peace and democracy in priority conflict-prone countries



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to OTI

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Overview | 1 |
| Where OTI Works | 2 |
| Strategies | 6 |
| Focus Areas | 8 |
| Programs | 10 |
| Collaborative Relationships | 12 |
| Local Partners | 14 |
| List of OTI Partners | 15 |

OTI Country Profiles

| | |
|---|----|
| Afghanistan | 16 |
| Burundi | 18 |
| Colombia | 20 |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) | 22 |
| East Timor (Timor Leste) | 24 |
| The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | 26 |
| Indonesia | 28 |
| Kosovo | 30 |
| Lebanon | 32 |
| Nigeria | 34 |
| Peru | 36 |
| Serbia-Montenegro | 38 |
| Sierra Leone | 40 |
| Venezuela | 42 |

OVERVIEW

A New Tool for a New Era

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, countries across the globe entered a period of dramatic change. Whether in Central Europe, Africa, Asia, or Latin America, authoritarian regimes yielded to the forces of democracy and ethnic and religious groups vied for control over states, while other longstanding rivals moved from the battlefield to the negotiating table. It quickly became apparent that choices made during these transitions had enormous influence on a country's future. It was also clear that traditional forms of humanitarian aid and development assistance were not suited to these new challenges. There was no mechanism to meet the rapid-response needs of the new era: stabilizing democratic transitions, mitigating conflict, and reconstructing war-torn nations.

USAID created the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in 1994 to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance to take advantage of windows of opportunity to build democracy and peace. OTI lays the foundation for long-term development by promoting reconciliation, jumpstarting economies, and helping stable democracy take hold.

To improve the likelihood of success, OTI instituted a distinctive mode of operations. First, it developed a culture of risk taking, political orientation, and swift response. This culture is reflected in a strategic approach that continually incorporates best practices and lessons learned. Second, OTI is funded by a separate "Transition Initiatives" budget account that allows immediate spending where it is most needed. Finally, OTI created an innovative contracting mechanism that preserves the principle of competition while allowing quick startup in new countries and provision of direct grants to small, indigenous organizations.

OTI Programs

- support community development programs that encourage political participation of marginalized groups and link constituents with elected representatives
- fund reintegration of ex-combatants into their communities as productive citizens
- back alternative media and public information campaigns to encourage peace, reconciliation, and informed participation in elections
- assist local efforts to fight corruption and promote transparent, accountable governance
- help governments develop action plans for key reforms and translate ideas into practice
- encourage measures to bring the military under civilian democratic control
- build capacity of civil society organizations to engage government officials in dialogue
- promote human rights through education, advocacy, monitoring, reporting, and provision of services to victims of rape and torture
- assist national governments to manage their strategic natural resources transparently, responsibly, and equitably to avoid illegal exploitation and trafficking
- support local efforts to mitigate and manage ethnic and religious conflict through training, improved communication, and confidence-building measures
- provide opportunities for children and adolescents to engage in constructive and educational activities, reducing their vulnerability to recruitment into the armed forces and other forms of exploitation and abuse ■

OTI's mission is to help local partners advance peace and democracy in priority conflict-prone countries. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key transition needs.

WHERE OTI WORKS

The right place ... the right time

Knowing where quick, targeted aid can make a difference—and being prepared to respond in a timely fashion—are among OTI's core duties. With its limited resources, OTI concentrates its assistance where it will have the greatest impact. This may be in countries where initial advances require immediate support to continue, as in Nigeria or Macedonia following a democratic election or a peace agreement; or, as in Venezuela, where political or economic divisions threaten to expand into large-scale crises.

To determine where it will devote its resources, OTI has developed four key criteria for engagement:

- *Is the country significant to U.S. national interests?* While humanitarian aid is distributed on the basis of need alone, transition assistance is allocated with an eye to advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives and priorities. Stable, democratic countries are more reliable trading partners, less likely to engage in aggression against their neighbors, less inclined to provide support for terrorists, and better able to meet the needs of their own people. In consultation with the State Department, the Defense Department, and the National Security Council—and with the consent of Congress—OTI seeks to focus its resources where they will have the greatest impact on U.S. diplomatic and security interests.
- *Is there a window of opportunity?* Even the best-intentioned assistance will be ineffective if the situation is not ripe for change. OTI cannot create a transition or impose democracy, but it can identify and support key individuals and groups who are committed to peaceful, participatory change. In short, OTI acts as a catalyst for change where there is sufficient indigenous political will. In most cases, a key event occurs—an election, a peace accord, or the rise of a mass nonviolent protest movement—that signals a fundamental realignment of power or direction. Before initiating a new country program, OTI determines the extent to which the “ingredients for success” are in place.
- *Is OTI's involvement necessary for success?* Because of its flexibility, OTI receives many more requests for assistance than it can fulfill. OTI insists that its programs neither duplicate nor substitute for other U.S. Government efforts, reserving its resources for where it can make a unique contribution. Before engaging, OTI explores whether U.S. assistance is desired by local partners, whether OTI is the most appropriate U.S. Government office to provide assistance, and whether OTI's resources and expertise are sufficient.

- *Is the operating environment sufficiently stable?* OTI is not a centralized grantmaking program; it is an operational office with staff working on the ground at the community level. While OTI is experienced working in some of the world's most sensitive and dangerous places, there must be enough stability to enable staff to travel outside of the capital to implement and monitor activities. ■

What Is a Transition?

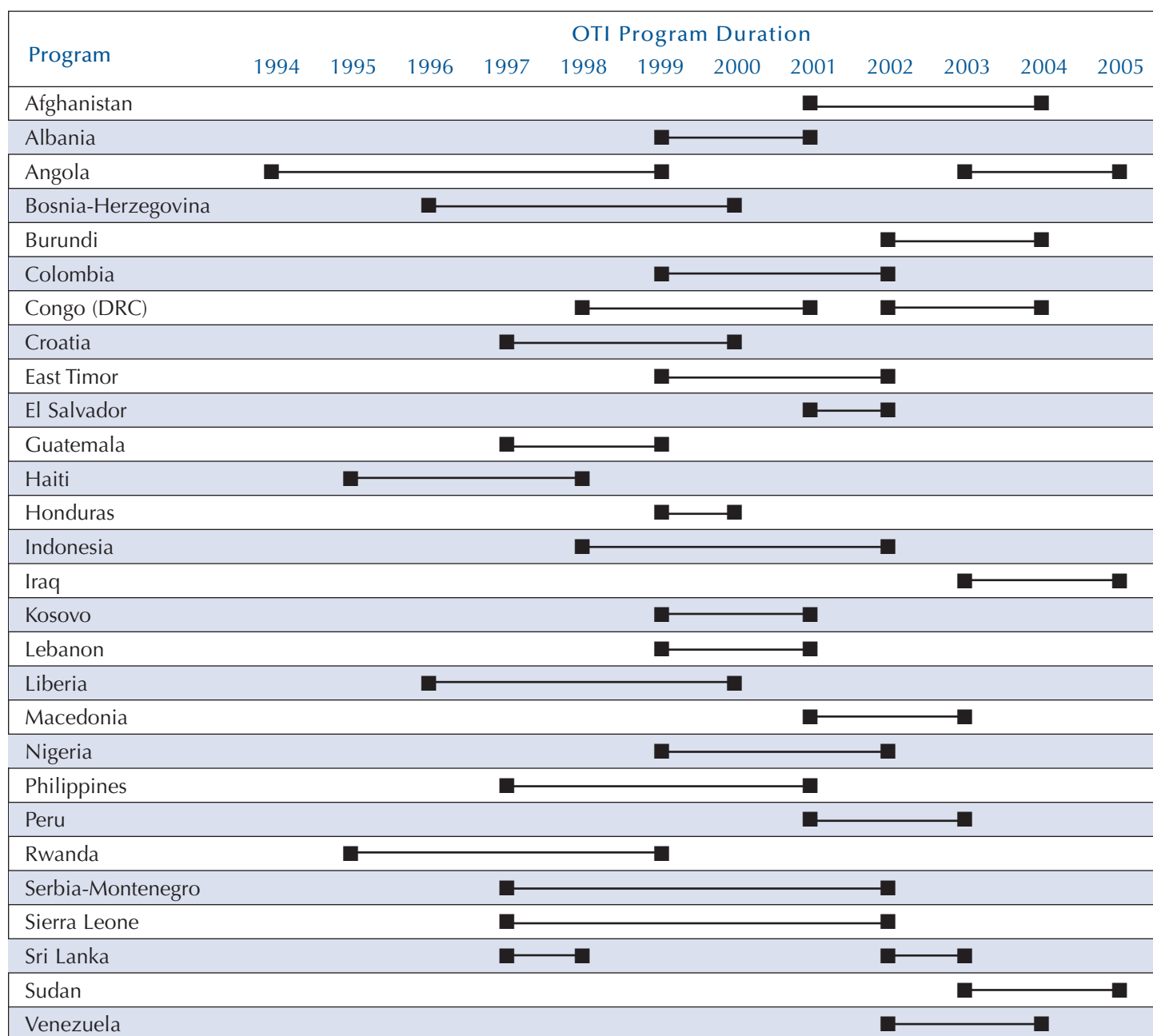
A transition is a time of high politicization and instability, as major groups within a country jockey for power and a new regime takes shape. During these periods, citizens are often preoccupied with personal security and meeting basic needs, unsure what the political changes mean. While long-term development programs may not be feasible during transition periods, profound advances toward democracy and peace are possible. OTI has worked in a diverse range of transition settings that generally fall into one of three categories:

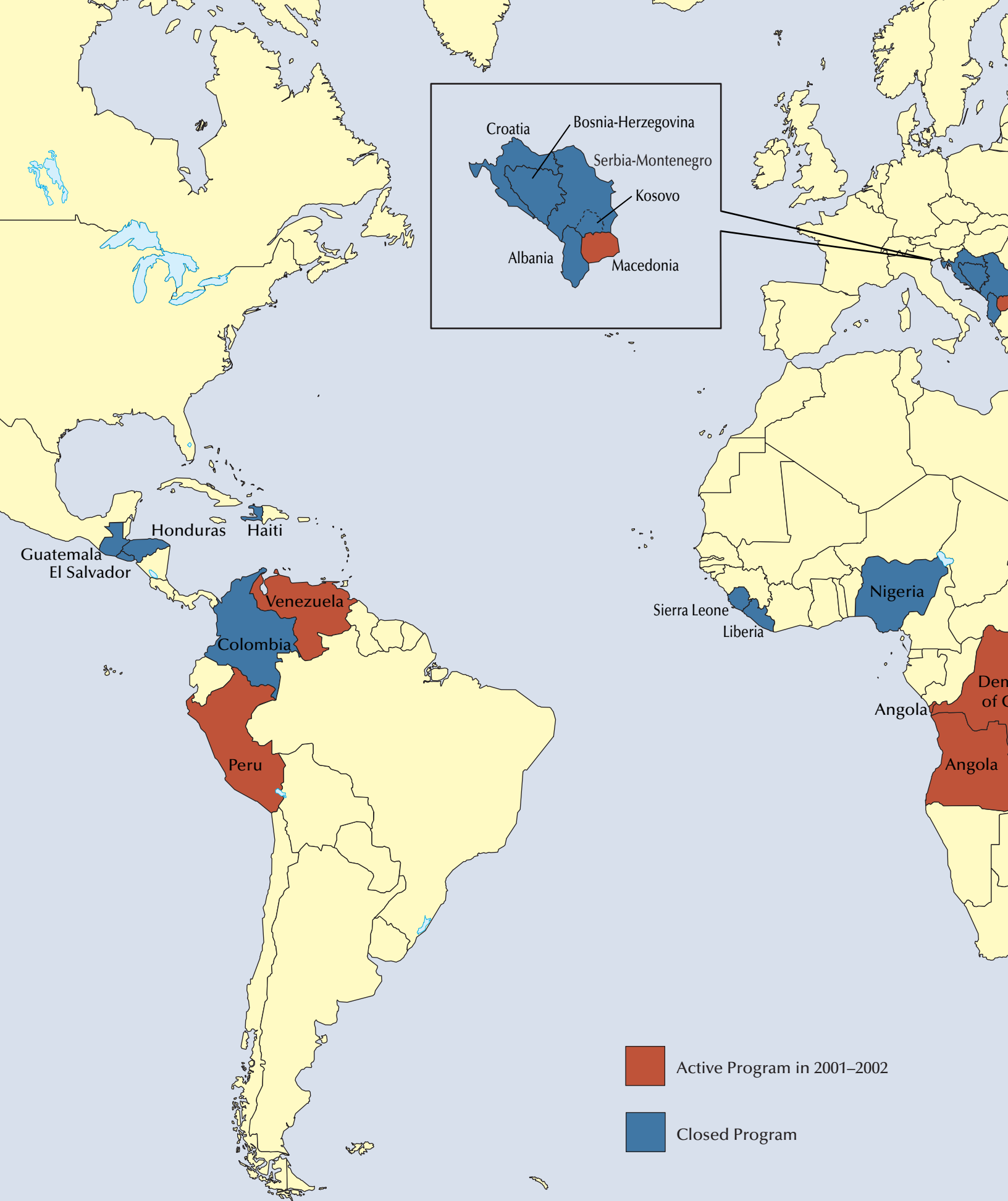
Transition to democracy: Transitions to democracy occur when a seminal event—typically an election—ushers in a democratic government after a period of military or autocratic rule. In these situations, OTI responds to the hunger of the newly elected leadership and the general population for improvements in information flows, governmental transparency and accountability, and participatory decisionmaking.

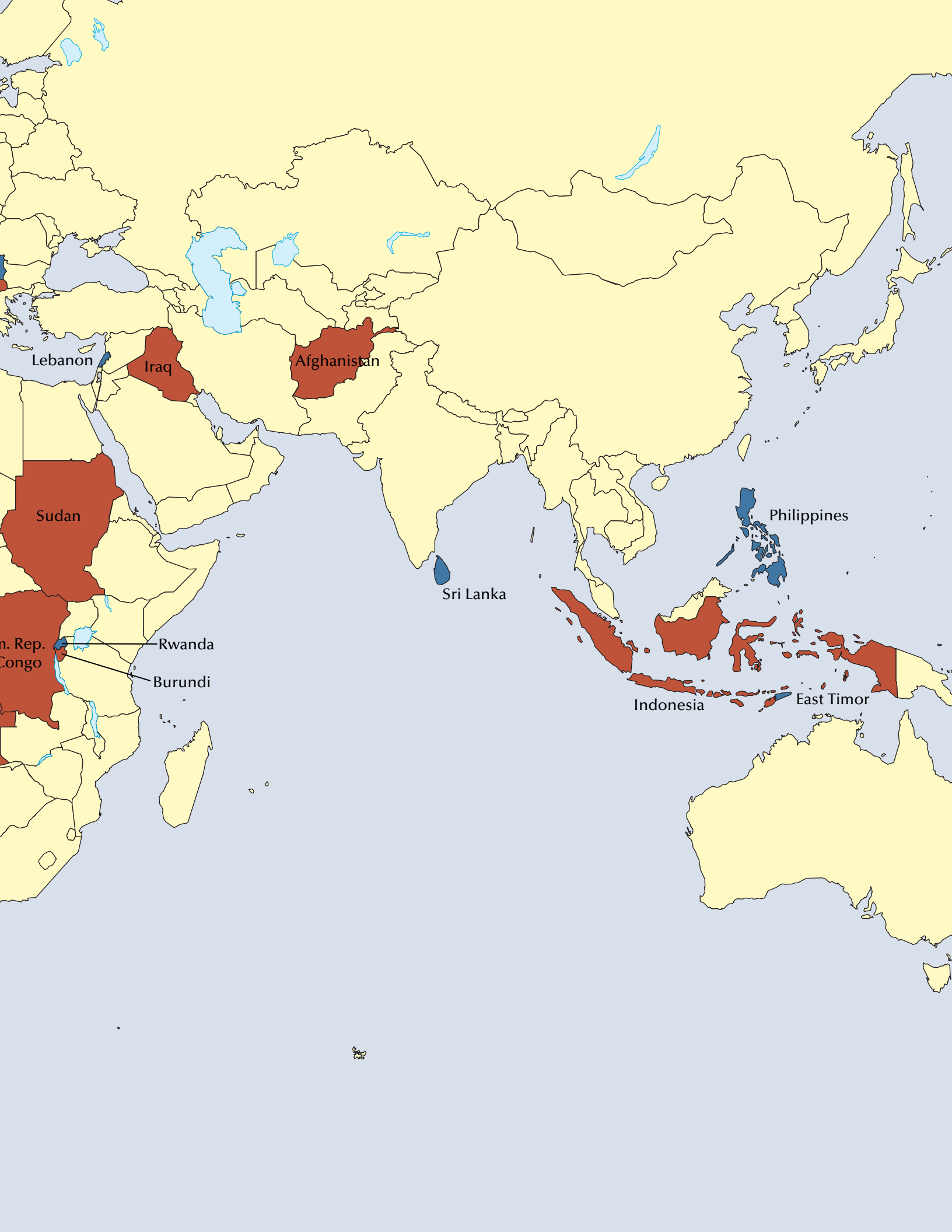
Transition to peace: Violent conflicts tend to be cyclical. If the pattern is not broken, cycles of retribution can repeat themselves for decades, even centuries. In the aftermath of civil wars, OTI seeks to create a foundation for a just and lasting peace by supporting the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements that provide a framework for inclusive governance and national reconciliation. OTI also supports efforts to increase local capacity to manage conflict and promote reconciliation, especially at the community level.

Transitional political crisis: In countries where democratic institutions come under serious challenge, or where ethnic, religious, or political rivalries threaten to flare into open violence, OTI tries to prevent the worst from happening. By shoring up democratic forces, seeking opportunities to introduce reform, and training communities to better manage conflict, OTI seeks to reverse the slide toward instability and return toward peace and democracy.

OTI Presence: 1994–2005







Lebanon

Iraq

Afghanistan

Sudan

n. Rep.
Congo

Rwanda

Burundi

Sri Lanka

Philippines

Indonesia

East Timor

STRATEGIES

OTI is guided by a number of strategic principles that have proven especially important for working in transition environments.

Rapid

OTI programs are conducted with a sense of urgency, much like those of the emergency response efforts of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. OTI can start up programs in new countries within days or weeks of a decision to intervene, and it can issue grants to small, local organizations within three days of receiving proposals. Particularly in countries where there is growing instability and for organizations without other sources of outside support, timely response can mean the difference between “now” and “never.”

Flexible

Rather than apportioning its funds far in advance, OTI attempts to reserve maximum resources for unanticipated contingencies—both in existing and future programs. To achieve this flexibility, OTI accords its field managers a high degree of authority over program decisions and delivers most of its funds through small, short-term grants instead of large, multiyear procurements.



An OTI trainer helps deliver a Codan radio system to Nooristan province, Afghanistan.

Transparent

In exchange for the flexibility granted OTI, Congress demands and deserves complete, accurate, and real-time information on how funds are being spent. OTI posts reports on its website at least monthly for its country programs, and it maintains a highly detailed grants database showing the amounts, purposes, recipients, and status of every subgrant.

“This flexible, fast assistance—for everything from temporary employment programs to work with political groups and the media—has addressed needs that other donors could not. Policymakers in Washington should explore options for enhancing this and other flexible, civilian, rapid-response capabilities.”

Robert Orr, National Security Studies Quarterly, Summer 2001

Political

For aidworkers it can be dangerous to take sides in a conflict or become affiliated with opposition movements. For OTI, the overriding goal is to advance peaceful democratic change and promote the political transformation needed for stability and prosperity. While OTI avoids partisan involvement, it believes that broadening participation in social, political, and economic decisionmaking is key to sustainable development.

Targeted

OTI's programs are individually designed to address a country's most pressing transition needs, focusing attention on the “make or break” issues that will decide the country's future. In developing its programs, OTI consults regularly with local partners and experts, and with key U.S. Government personnel and other donors. This approach ensures that each program is tailored to the country's unique circumstances and that OTI's resources are carefully prioritized.

Community-Based

OTI takes a bottom-up approach to democracy, seeking to encourage those traditionally left out of decisionmaking to play an active role in determining their futures. Across its programs, OTI has reached out to the marginalized, including women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, rural populations, and internally displaced persons. Although OTI works with local, regional, and national governments, its funds are normally provided in the form of small grants to local community groups and nongovernmental organizations.

Tangible

In uncertain transitional periods, the population needs assurance that democracy or peace are worth the risks. Unless there is a visible, positive impact on their everyday lives, average citizens may lose faith in the benefits of political change. OTI supports projects that create and publicize tangible “transition dividends” that help sustain the momentum for positive change.

Short-Term

Transitions from war to peace or dictatorship to democracy take years, even decades. However, the first two to three years—before traditional development programs can take hold—are often the most critical for success. OTI generally limits its involvement to this initial period, when the program’s expertise, speed, and flexibility provide a comparative advantage.

Catalytic

Since OTI seeks to have a tangible impact in a short time with limited resources, it must support activities that will instigate broad change and leverage longer-term support from other donors. OTI looks for partners and projects that will provide the spark for social transformation and that can be replicated on a larger scale. Often this involves training trainers who continue to pass on skills at a multiplying rate, or developing media programming that reaches large segments of the population.

“One of the most innovative models
in AID’s long history”

John McDonald, Harvard International Review, Fall 2000

Complementary

OTI has learned that its programs are much more effective when they build on or lay the foundations for longer-term development efforts. To retain its special niche that strengthens—rather than duplicates, substitutes for, or competes with—other programs, OTI coordinates all its activities with the relevant USAID offices and undertakes only those that are deemed valuable but cannot be reasonably carried out by others.

Field-Focused

OTI recognizes that to implement programs in fluid political settings and respond to fleeting windows of opportunity, field-based staff require a high degree of autonomy and independence. Field staff are encouraged to take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of programs, including most grant decisions, while Washington-based program managers



OTI addressed the psychosocial needs of children and families affected by violence and displacement in Colombia.

provide support and broad strategic direction. In addition, OTI avoids concentrating all its efforts in the capital city, opening as many as seven field offices in each country.

Risk Taking

Fear of a spectacular mistake making the headlines discourages many development programs from taking risks. While reducing the amount of its financial exposure through small and short-term grants, OTI actively seeks out new partners and unusual ideas that have the potential to yield major dividends. Some of the groups that OTI supported while they were still unknown, such as *Otpor* in Serbia, ultimately became leading forces for positive change.

Innovative

OTI began as something of a laboratory for USAID, where new types of programming and methods of operating could be explored. To ensure that its funds are quick-disbursing and flexible, OTI created a special contracting mechanism known as SWIFT (Support Which Implements Fast Transitions) to deploy staff to the field on short notice and to deliver small grants to local organizations. ■

FOCUS AREAS

BUILDING CONFIDENCE ... OFFERING HOPE

Conflict

Conflict—in the sense of controversy and disagreement—is a natural occurrence during a political transition, as major societal groups begin to recognize and assert diverging interests. It is important to learn to manage such conflicts peacefully. Without avenues for airing and resolving differences, there is a greater chance for disputes to turn violent.

OTI has employed a broad range of strategies to mitigate and manage violent conflict. Where political settlements have not yet been concluded, OTI has facilitated negotiations between the principal parties and provided opportunities for a broader cross-section of society to participate in the process. In Indonesia, for example, OTI helped bring government officials and regional insurgents to the bargaining table. In Sierra Leone, OTI introduced civil society representatives directly into the official negotiation process.

Implementation of a peace agreement can be just as problematic as its negotiation. Failure to implement key provisions—such as demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants, resolving the status of political prisoners, constituting truth and reconciliation commissions, or organizing elections—has the potential to derail the peace process. OTI is frequently called upon to facilitate implementation of peace accords by providing the technical assistance or financial resources to turn plans into action. Once a settlement is in place, OTI has helped build grassroots support for it. A notable example is Burundi, where OTI organized

a national tour of politicians who were promoting the Arusha Accords that paved the way for the formation of a transitional government.

Engaging local communities in the reconciliation process is a core feature of all OTI programs because such engagement strengthens the foundation for peace. A common strategy is to provide divided communities with “safe spaces” where rival groups can work together on shared concerns. By engaging both sides in activities that benefit everyone, OTI’s programs have helped not only to build trust and confidence, but have helped establish an open and participatory decisionmaking process and create tangible peace dividends.

“OTI staff quickly developed an appreciation for the causes of the conflict and [were] able to establish rapid response activities designed to promote peace and conflict reduction and to provide support directly to victims of violence at the local level.”

George Wachtenheim, former Mission Director, USAID/Colombia

Another approach has been to organize local community leaders to recognize and put out “sparks” that could ignite violence. In Nigeria, such a strategy succeeded in defusing a 150-year-old violent conflict between the Ifes and the Modakekes that had defied the top-down solutions devised by traditional leaders, colonial administrators, and Nigerian government officials.

Stereotyping and rumor-mongering are potent threats to peace and reconciliation. OTI programs address these problems by supporting accurate and balanced reporting in the news media and through public education campaigns that promote a culture of tolerance.

Media

OTI has found that media activities are particularly suited to transition programs because they can convey messages of peace and democracy to large numbers of people quickly. Most OTI country programs have had a media component, a recognition that independent and balanced sources of news are not only a powerful tool for shaping expectations and transforming political culture, but also for magnifying the impact of other transition programming.

OTI’s support of independent media has included the development of infrastructure where it was destroyed or nonexistent; programming where messages of tolerance, nonviolence, and democratic participation were needed; and human resources



In the aftermath of May 2000 communal riots that left thousands dead in Kaduna, Nigeria, OTI supported a program to promote reconciliation and coexistence between Christians and Muslims. Posters, T-shirts, and radio spots were part of a media campaign organized by an interfaith consortium that reminded people of both faiths that they are called upon to live in peace.

where journalists were unfamiliar with the tools and methods for accurate, professional, and responsible news reporting.

In Macedonia, for instance, OTI funded documentaries, newspaper inserts, and magazines describing shared aspirations for peace and providing examples of successful cooperation among ethnic groups. OTI also sponsored media campaigns promoting interethnic cooperation, minority rights, and nonviolence. In Indonesia, OTI developed a media guidebook and training packet to help nongovernmental organizations develop their skills in interacting with the press and becoming effective advocates for their causes.

In Afghanistan, OTI focused the majority of its support on capacity-building projects such as training journalists, improving public information dissemination, and providing Radio Afghanistan infrastructure to restart nationwide broadcasting. With USAID's technical and financial support, Radio Afghanistan began broadcasting nationwide in early June 2002. A satellite terminal was installed that linked its signal to off-shore shortwave transmitters that rebroadcast throughout the country. In other countries, OTI's media-related activities have focused on providing humanitarian information to refugees and displaced persons, as in Afghanistan and West Timor; improving broadcast capacity with technology and equipment, as in Kosovo; and expanding access to news coverage for rural populations, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo. OTI tailors its media programs to respond to changing circumstances and address local needs.

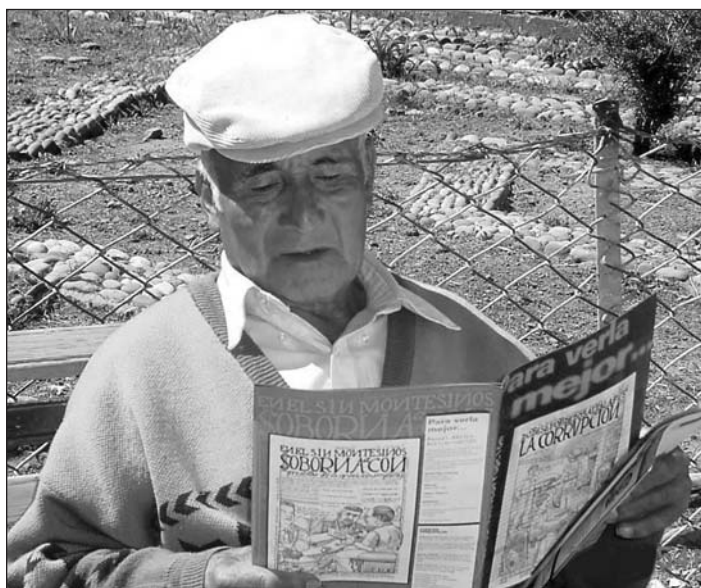


In Macedonia, OTI's efforts to get out the vote included a series of television spots featuring "K-15," the country's version of Monty Python. The spots took aim at widespread voter apathy, declaring that an uninterested electorate would make election fraud more likely.

Community Participation

OTI firmly believes in the value of bottom-up decisionmaking, giving average citizens a voice in the issues that affect their lives and a stake in assuring a successful outcome. As part of the small grants process, OTI programs typically require local communities to contribute to a project; they not only actively participate in its identification and design, but they contribute their labor and financial resources. In Kosovo, OTI formed Community Improvement Councils (CICs), informally elected groups of citizens with diverse backgrounds and interests. CICs decided on community improvement priorities such as water system repairs, electrification projects, and rehabilitation of schools, health clinics, markets, and roads. OTI then supported these projects with its resources, and leveraged contributions from other donors and from local communities themselves.

In addition to empowering citizens, OTI's grassroots efforts help develop constructive relationships between government officials and their constituents, thereby strengthening democratic governance and building long-term stability. OTI's model of community involvement was adopted by the World Bank in East Timor, and it is currently being used in Afghanistan. According to an independent evaluation of OTI's East Timor program, "By getting the program funds moving, OTI helped stabilize the political situation, gave the district administrators credibility, repaired market buildings and schools, improved the water supply, opened roads, and allowed people to work together." ■



OTI programs often support the printing and dissemination of news and information. In Peru, brochures educated citizens about the dangers of corruption and its toll on the Peruvian economy.

PROGRAMS

A Hands-On Approach

OTI's programs take many forms. They can be small grants to indigenous civil society organizations or technical advice and equipment for special commissions, negotiating teams, and government ministries. In each case, OTI works on the ground alongside its implementing partners and takes an active role in program operation and direction.

OTI conducts its activities in countries with large USAID missions as well as in areas where there is no other U.S. Government representation. In countries with long-standing USAID presence, such as Peru, OTI provides short-term support during transitional periods while the mission retargets existing development programs to address newly identified needs. In countries such as East Timor, OTI has served as the "face" of the U.S. Government to the local population, managing assistance programs until a permanent USAID mission could be established and providing real-time political analysis to the Department of State.

In addition to its country programs, OTI provides technical support to USAID missions seeking to develop transition programs on their own. OTI's expertise in areas such as conflict management, media training, and community empowerment can help, even in countries that do not meet OTI's criteria for transition assistance.



Staff of Radio Okapi prepare to broadcast the daily news in Kisangani, Democratic Republic of Congo.

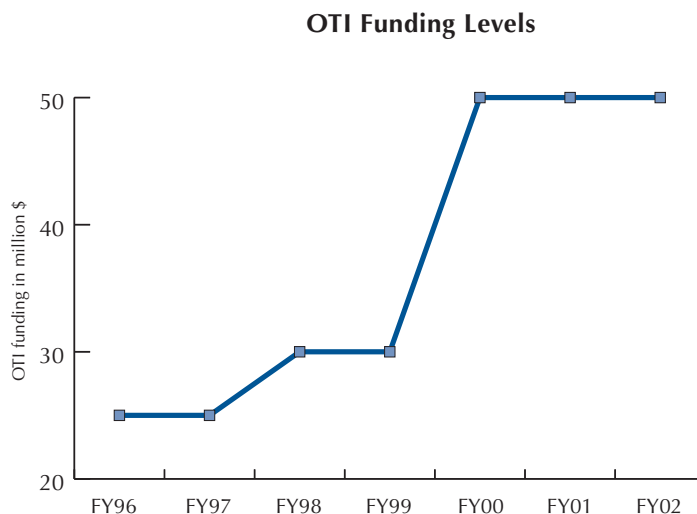
"OTI stands out among international donor programs focused on reconstruction and infrastructure development as the only organization which followed the approach of asking citizens what they needed or wanted, versus presenting project ideas to them to accept or reject."

*Associates in Rural Development (ARD),
Final Evaluation of OTI/Kosovo*

Resources

Since its 1994 creation, OTI has operated in 26 diverse settings across the globe and in every major region. With its headquarters in Washington, DC, and field offices in each country where it has programs, OTI employs about 60 full-time staff, two-thirds of whom are based in the field. Most are hired on a contract basis, including several who are "on call" to be deployed as needed in response to changing circumstances. OTI's field staff is augmented by locally hired foreign nationals and the staff of contractors and grantees who help implement the programs.

OTI is funded through a special account in the annual foreign operations appropriation, as well as through transfers from other offices. Direct funding for OTI was \$50 million per year in fiscal years 1999–2002. Other USAID and State Department offices contributed an additional \$20–25 million annually.



Small Grants

One of OTI's preferred methods of operation is to issue small grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000, that support small infrastructure repairs, participatory activities, and peacebuilding efforts in transition settings. Often, the grantees are emerging civil society groups unable to qualify for traditional development assistance requiring financial audits and lengthy grant applications. OTI works directly with prospective grantees to help them design projects that are appropriate for U.S. Government support, avoiding the frustration that comes with repeated rejection and the expense of hiring proposal writers.

Because many of these grantees do not have adequate accounting systems to handle large amounts of cash, OTI often procures goods and services for the groups. For instance, OTI might purchase a fax machine, newsprint, computer equipment, conference facilities, or radio airtime. OTI's implementing partners monitor all grants closely to ensure that items arrive in working order and are being used as intended.



OTI's program in Macedonia supports projects identified and implemented by communities. In this village, local people provided the labor and OTI the materials to rehabilitate a road that linked the health clinic and mayor's office to the main road.

To administer these small grants, OTI has developed the SWIFT contracting mechanism, which is currently being renewed, revised, and expanded. Under SWIFT, partners must be ready to initiate programs in new countries and issue small grants to indigenous organizations within 72 hours. This enables OTI to respond rapidly and efficiently as opportunities arise, reducing the burden on USAID contracting officers and moving grant decisions to the field. ■

Making a Difference

OTI brings practical, political, peacebuilding ideas to life rapidly and nimbly. Working closely with local, national, international, and nongovernmental partners, OTI carries out high-impact projects to increase momentum for democratization, ethnic and political reconciliation, and community rehabilitation. It counts the following among its major achievements to date:

- *Democratic transformation in Serbia.* Critical OTI assistance provided to the student youth group *Otpor* and other fledgling organizations enabled them to contest the rigged election results, force former President Slobodan Milosevic from office, and hand him over to the UN War Crimes Tribunal.
- *Reconciliation in Sierra Leone.* OTI developed a model "Education for Peace" program that not only helped reintegrate some 48,000 ex-combatants and war-affected youth, but also taught them strategies for resolving differences peacefully in their new jobs and communities.
- *Reconstruction in East Timor.* In the desperate months after Indonesian troops destroyed and terrorized the island nation, OTI put people to work rebuilding their

communities and helped jumpstart civil society organizations—all before international agencies were able to issue their first grants of assistance.

- *Grassroots participation in Kosovo.* In a province torn apart by ethnic violence and exclusion, OTI helped Kosovars form Community Improvement Councils that reflected the diversity of the local population and maximized the number of Kosovars participating in political decisionmaking. The councils have helped facilitate democratic elections and postelection stability.
- *Transition to democracy in Nigeria.* To respond to growing concerns that Nigeria's military rulers would renege on their promise to hand over power to a democratically elected government, OTI organized a massive training program for 10,300 newly elected federal, state, and local officials, providing new skills and tools for democratic, open, and accountable governance.

Certainly, these countries continue to face numerous hardships and occasional setbacks on the road to peace and prosperity. However, OTI's interventions at the very moments when their fragile progress was most threatened helped ensure that the forces of democracy won out.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

In order to multiply the impact of its programs, OTI coordinates and co-funds projects with other U.S. Government offices, donors, international and U.S. NGOs, and local communities. By building collaborative relationships, OTI not only provides policy input and leverages resources for ongoing activities, but also identifies partners to whom OTI may hand over activities at the end of a country program.

USAID

OTI works closely with other offices in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA). OTI regularly partners with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Office for Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) in the analysis of countries undergoing transitions. OTI works with the Office for Democracy and Governance (DG) on issues related to elections, legal reform, and civil society development. Outside of DCHA, OTI engages with USAID's regional bureaus and missions, which have the sustained presence and expertise that are key to effective conflict management and long-term development. OTI's close partnership with the Office of Procurement enables it to complete grants and contracts in a timely manner and to meet the needs of countries in transition.



Lawrence Butler, U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia, lends a hand to help rehabilitate a local primary school, a project undertaken to help bring a politically divided community together.

U.S. Government

OTI coordinates closely with U.S. Government offices to develop a coherent strategy. Partners include the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and the National Security Council. On occasion, OTI will develop agreements with other agencies to implement components of a country program. For example, OTI has worked with various U.S. Government radio outlets to build capacity and provide content.

International Organizations

As international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, and their affiliates channel more of their resources into postconflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, it is increasingly important for OTI to coordinate its efforts on a multilateral basis. OTI not only works directly with international agencies to implement its programs, it also collaborates on the ground with UN administrators and peacekeepers to ensure that programs and policies are complementary.

Implementing Partners

Through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements, OTI works with U.S.-based development firms, international

Partnership in Action



To provide life-skills training and vocational assistance to local communities in Sierra Leone, OTI turned to World Vision.

In Sierra Leone, OTI worked with Management Systems International (MSI) to develop the curriculum and methodology for a nonformal education initiative for ex-combatants and war-affected youth. To reach the local communities, OTI turned to World Vision, a nonprofit humanitarian organization with staff and offices located throughout the country. World Vision organized local communities to select trainers and participants for the program, which eventually provided reintegration orientation and counseling, life-skills training, vocational assistance, agriculture skills development, civic education, and functional literacy training to approximately 48,000 young adults.



A community in Serbia rebuilds infrastructure with support from OTI.

agencies, and private voluntary organizations to implement its programs. Often, these groups have long-term experience in the countries where OTI operates. Their trained personnel and ability to rapidly mobilize resources and their in-country networks enable OTI to act quickly and effectively on the ground.

Local Organizations and Host Governments

Peace and democracy cannot be imposed from without: they must be created from within. OTI supports local and indigenous organizations that work to expand political participation, promote ethnic harmony and reconciliation, and create hope for the future. Whether faith-based or secular, many of these civil society organizations are new to the political arena and have little experience with international aid agencies. With help from OTI to get off the ground, some of these groups have become key engines of democratic reform and conflict resolution in their own countries. In addition, OTI works closely with host governments to ensure that programs started by OTI continue once OTI leaves.

Handover

Given OTI's limited implementation timeframe, it is important that it works from the very start of each program to ensure a smooth handover. By collaborating with the relevant USAID regional bureau, issue-area experts, and the local USAID mission, OTI enables the continuation of programs that may be needed after OTI has left.

For each country program, OTI develops a handover strategy that defines goals and objectives, specifies how and when they

Handover in Kosovo

When OTI began its assistance program in Kosovo, there were no formal institutions of local governance. Elections were yet to be held and the Serbian government made all decisions for the province. OTI established Community Improvement Councils (CICs) as the basis for citizen political participation and economic rehabilitation. The CICs were so effective that other donors began using them to channel assistance to local communities.

After local elections, however, it was essential that the CICs learn to work with their government representatives rather than substituting for them or competing with them. OTI engaged in consultations with the USAID mission to determine how future assistance could build on these networks without undermining the electoral process. When OTI concluded its operations in Kosovo, the mission hired many of OTI's local staff in offices around the province and pledged to continue supporting CIC activities as a way to facilitate more transparent local government and ensure a participatory approach to development.

According to an independent study by USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation,¹ "USAID/Kosovo's buy-in to the OTI activities meant that longer term mission programs could build on OTI's short-term investment, experience, and contacts with more than 3,000 Kosovars directly associated with the CICs. USAID mission leadership indicated that OTI's work at the CIC level, spurred by the October 28, 2000, elections, would create sufficient momentum for achieving the longer term results of the mission's democracy/governance program."

¹ CDIE is now the Office of Development Evaluation and Information.

will be met, and plans for transferring management of successful projects to the USAID mission or other donors. As most OTI projects are short term, they often require sustained follow-up to have maximum impact. For this reason, other offices participate in program discussions and develop a stake in their success. ■

LOCAL PARTNERS

FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

Certain groups are particularly vulnerable during periods of transition, especially women, children, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and ex-combatants. OTI programs both directly and indirectly benefit these vulnerable populations by engaging them in decisionmaking processes that enable them to rebuild their communities.

Children and Youth

Children and youth are often overlooked in the planning and design of foreign assistance programs, even though they may represent a significant proportion or even a majority of the population. In conflict-prone countries, young people without education, skills, recreational outlets, or hope for the future are prime candidates for recruitment into rebel forces. Younger children who are unsupervised, separated from their families, or living in dire poverty have become victims of human trafficking. OTI attempts to address the needs of war-affected children and youth by rehabilitating schools and recreation centers, engaging young people in peacebuilding activities, and providing psycho-social assistance, remedial education, and vocational training to former child soldiers.

Women

In transition settings, women face both barriers and opportunities for participation in the reconstruction of their societies. They may experience problems obtaining humanitarian assistance, lack access to jobs and credit, and be excluded from political decisionmaking. To promote women's participation in the rebuilding of their countries, OTI seeks to ensure that their needs are directly addressed in all aspects of program design and implementation. In Afghanistan, OTI provided approximately \$800,000 for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, including \$125,000 for building renovations, office equipment, and technical advice. Elsewhere, OTI ensured that women are given an equal voice in community reconstruction efforts; provided equipment and supplies for truth and reconciliation commissions investigating rape as a war crime; and helped local women's organizations become effective advocates and service providers.

Internally Displaced Persons

Those forced to flee areas of fighting often find themselves without access to legitimate sources of income, and they may be separated from family and friends who could provide support. When they receive financial support from foreign donors, IDPs may be resented or exploited by local populations who are equally poor but excluded from assistance. Yet without such aid, an influx of IDPs can strain local resources and exacerbate regional or ethnic tensions. In addressing the needs of IDPs, OTI has worked in Indonesia, Colombia, and elsewhere to help build bridges to displaced populations, reintegrating them into the local economies, and reducing conflict within communities.

Ex-Combatants

OTI seeks in its programming to include segments of the population who could become "spoilers" for the peace process. These include soldiers who have been disarmed and demobilized but not yet properly reintegrated into civilian life. For these ex-combatants who once wielded great power through the barrel of a gun, living peacefully under the rule of law is a difficult adjustment. OTI's programs to help ex-combatants learn trades, find jobs, and reorient ways of thinking are designed to reduce the potential for a return to armed conflict. ■



In Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, students celebrate the inauguration of the Sultan Razia Girls' School that OTI helped rebuild.

LIST OF OTI PARTNERS

| Organization | Website |
|--|--|
| Action Contre la Faim | www.acf-fr.org |
| AMIDEAST | amideast.org |
| The Asia Foundation | asiafoundation.org |
| CARE | care.org |
| Catholic Relief Services | catholicrelief.org |
| Christian Children's Fund | christianchildrensfund.org |
| Conflict Management Group (CMG) | cmgroup.org |
| Creative Associates International, Inc. | www.caii.net |
| Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) | www.dai.com |
| Fondation Hironnelle | www.hironnelle.org |
| Georgetown University | nso.georgetown.edu/colombia.htm |
| International Catholic Migration Commission | www.icmc.net |
| International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) | icfj.org |
| International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) | www.icrc.org |
| International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES) | www.ifes.org |
| International Medical Corps | www.imc-la.com |
| International Organization for Migration (IOM) | www.iom.int |
| International Republican Institute (IRI) | iri.org |
| Institute of World Affairs | iwa.org |
| Internews | internews.org |
| Javeriana University | www.javeriana.edu.co |
| Louis Berger Group, Inc. | louisberger.com/berger/now |
| LP3ES (Indonesian NGO) | lp3es.or.id/kanan.shtml |
| Management Systems International | msiworldwide.com |
| Mercy Corps | mercycorps.org |
| National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) | www.ndi.org |
| PACT | pactworld.org |
| Ronco Consulting Corporation | roncoconsulting.com |
| Saatchi & Saatchi | www.saatchi.com |
| Salesian Missions | salesianmissions.org |
| Save the Children Foundation | savethechildren.org |
| Search for Common Ground | www.sfcg.org |
| SUNY-Albany's Center for Legislative Development | albany.edu |
| U.S. Department of Justice/International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) | www.usdoj.gov/criminal/icitap.html |
| U.S. Department of Energy | eia.doe.gov/emcu/cabs/nigeria.html |
| Voice of America | www.voa.gov |
| World Vision International | wvi.org |
| WSP International | www.wsp-international.org |

AFGHANISTAN

Program Facts

Duration: Oct 01–TBA

FY2002 Budget: \$30 million

Objectives: Strengthen capacity of Afghan Interim Authority to govern effectively and accountably; expand citizen and community participation in decisionmaking; support voices of moderation and peace; increase availability and quality of public information

Partners: International Organization for Migration; Internews; Ronco Consulting Corporation

Background

Located strategically between the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian sub-continent, Afghanistan has been a battleground, not just for superpowers and their proxies, but for adjoining countries as well. By 1996, after more than a decade of Soviet occupation and civil war, a group of extremist Muslims known as the Taliban seized control of most of the country. When its leaders refused to surrender Osama bin Laden—accused of masterminding terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in 1998 and on the Pentagon and World Trade Center in 2001—the United States and Great Britain initiated air strikes. By late October 2001, less than a month after military operations had begun, OTI started delivering assistance and paving the way for a democratic transition.

OTI's initial efforts were aimed at providing displaced Afghans with information about food and emergency relief. In February 2002, OTI retargeted its program to support the process of recovery, rehabilitation, and political stabilization.

Activities

Providing Humanitarian Information

Responding to rapidly unfolding events in October 2001, OTI designed initiatives to distribute relevant and timely information on humanitarian assistance to the Afghan population, particularly

internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups. Activities included production of a daily humanitarian information bulletin for radio broadcast, distribution of 30,000 radios, small grants to civil society groups for communication and education projects, and expansion of the Voice of America's broadcast capacity in the region.

"OTI's fast grant work has given credibility to USAID's response in Afghanistan."

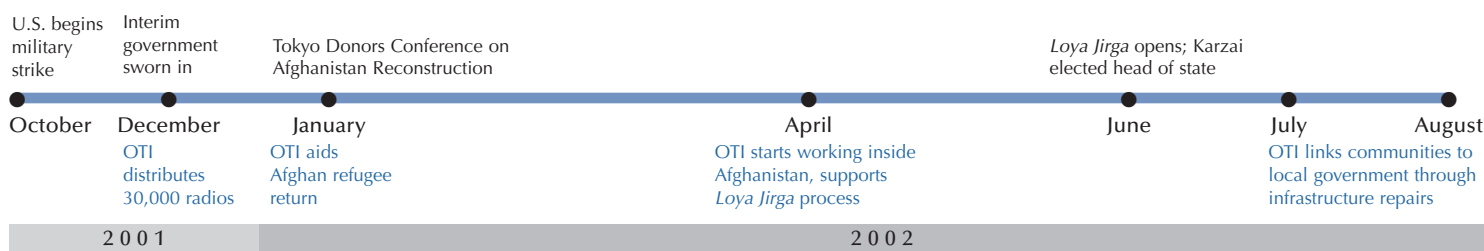
*Jim Kunder
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Asia and the Near East*

Expanding Access to the Emergency Loya Jirga

In June 2002, a traditional council of leaders known as the *Loya Jirga* met to elect a transitional interim leader for the country. To ensure the session would be broadly representative of and accessible to the Afghan population, OTI provided logistical support for participants; a shortwave radio transmitter and other infrastructure that enabled nationwide broadcast of the meeting; production assistance to the *Loya Jirga* Commission; and preparatory radio and print journalist training.

Building Government Capacity

To strengthen the new government's capacity to provide services to citizens, OTI funded repair and reconstruction of



key buildings as well as training of new officials. For instance, OTI support for reconstruction of government kindergartens enabled female employees, particularly war widows, to return to work. A grant for communications equipment and training to the Central Bank allowed Afghanistan to make its first international banking transaction in years. In addition to its direct activities, OTI worked jointly with other donors through the UNDP Trust Fund, part of the UN-brokered Bonn Agreement that established Afghanistan's interim government and set a timetable for the country's return to democratic rule.

Improving Government Outreach

Starting in the summer of 2002, OTI began focusing its efforts on local infrastructure repairs that help develop critical linkages between local governments and communities. OTI also addressed such community-prioritized needs as water projects, market rehabilitation, and small-scale power supply. OTI-funded radio systems enabled communication between Kabul and provincial ministries that previously had no quick and reliable way of transmitting local issues and concerns. OTI support enabled the Ministry of Water and Power to undertake electrical repairs, fix damaged electrical cabling, and provide electricity to thousands of residents in Kabul.

Developing Media Infrastructure

Through support for a free and independent media, OTI is encouraging dialogue between government and its constituents and among citizens themselves. To this end, OTI awarded a grant for hands-on training of journalists to produce balanced and accurate reporting, funded technical support and upgrades of broadcast equipment, and assisted in the drafting of an Afghan media policy and regulatory framework. ■

OTI Contributions to the Emergency *Loya Jirga*

The USAID mission director called on OTI for assistance that would help the Afghan government organize and conduct an Emergency *Loya Jirga*, the national-level assembly of elders called for in the Bonn Agreement. The need was not only to overcome logistical hurdles to the convening of the meeting, but to provide thorough dissemination of its proceedings. Broad participation of the Afghan public was required for the assembly to become the springboard for a new democracy.



President Hamid Karzai addresses Loya Jirga delegates.

OTI worked with a variety of contractors and grantees in country to generate collaborative efforts that capitalized on the strengths of each organization. For example, using a pre-existing relationship with IOM to produce radio spots, OTI called on the Asia Foundation—with the support of USAID/Afghanistan—to use its contacts in Pakistan to reproduce the spots. UN aircraft flew the tapes and disks back into Kabul. Among those helping to distribute the material were

donor agencies and representatives of the Afghan Interim Authority and the international military forces. At the same time, OTI procured a satellite dish and satellite transmission time for Radio Afghanistan in Kabul to ensure the nationwide broadcast of information about the *Loya Jirga*. The joint effort would not have been possible without the central coordinating role of OTI and its staff.

A major challenge was not only selecting over 1,600 delegates to the *Loya Jirga*, but providing for their security, transportation, housing, and food for the 10-day event. The UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan was responsible for the political oversight of the event, but the responsibilities associated with the logistical aspects were less clear. OTI hired a director of operations to coordinate efforts from early April through the end of the event and provided funding for equipment and resources. Although the meeting itself did not guarantee the future of democracy in Afghanistan, a relatively successful *Loya Jirga* gave Afghans experience with a more participatory approach to decisionmaking and, with it, hope for their country's future.

BURUNDI

Program Facts

Duration: May 02–May 04

FY2002 Budget: \$2.2 million

Objectives: Increase active and informed discussions among people of diverse ethnic groups about common public issues; encourage government institutions at all levels to become more transparent and accountable

Partners: National Democratic Institute; International Republican Institute; International Foundation for Election Systems

Background

Although some 85 percent of Burundi's population is Hutu, the country's political and economic life traditionally has been dominated by Tutsis. After years of civil unrest, Burundi's first Hutu president was elected in 1993, only to be assassinated just over three months later by factions of the Tutsi-led armed forces. The country was plunged into a civil war that killed tens of thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands. Just months after the government regained control, the newly elected president of Burundi and the president of neighboring Rwanda were killed in a plane crash, touching off one of the worst genocides in history.

“USAID/OTI has made it possible for all parliamentarians to meet with their constituents, most of whom had not been able to visit with their constituents since 1993.”

*Libere Bararunyeretse
Burundi Senate President*

Despite repeated attempts at a negotiated settlement, the influx of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees and the activities of armed Hutu and Tutsi groups kept Burundi in a perpetual cycle of authoritarian rule and widespread violence. On November 1, 2001, a transitional government was inaugurated that

incorporated representatives of 17 Hutu and Tutsi parties, the first tangible evidence of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (APRA) signed by those parties in August 2000.

Despite the fact that there is a peace agreement and a transitional government in place, the ceasefire has not been implemented and sporadic fighting continues. In March 2002, OTI initiated a program to support the tenuous peace process and the transition to democracy, as articulated in the APRA. By promoting a culture of peace and justice, OTI seeks to build momentum for the implementation of the accord and to lay the foundation for ethnic reconciliation.

Activities

Strengthening the Legislature's Role as a Catalyst for Peace

To enhance the Burundi Parliament's capacity for promoting peace and reconciliation, OTI funded a six-month effort by NDI and IRI to improve awareness among Burundian legislators of their roles and responsibilities under the APRA and to increase cooperation among members of different political parties. The series of seminars and training workshops also encouraged representatives to undertake outreach initiatives to encourage public dialogue and meet with their constituents. The president of the Burundi Senate publicly thanked OTI for its support in bringing legislators together with their constituents. He said that

Arusha peace accord signed, but fighting continues

August

Transitional government inaugurated

November

OTI sends assessment team

March

OTI begins program; workshops held for newly elected parliamentarians

June

OTI small grants program begins

2001

2002

“Members of the Parliament and the Senate have been able to rebuild contacts with their constituents thanks to the assistance of USAID/OTI We are grateful for their continuous reminder of our responsibilities to ensure the optimal functioning of the national politics.”

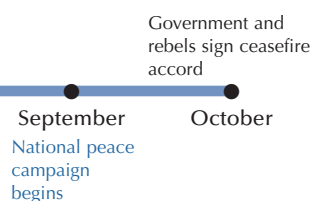
Jean Minani

President of the Burundi National Assembly.
Opening Session of Parliament,
January 2003

OTI's program had provided Burundians with a better understanding of their legislative institutions and sensitized legislators to problems facing their constituents.

Encouraging Public Participation in the Peace Process

The Burundi Initiative for Peace, implemented in partnership with IFES, provides small grants to encourage popular support for the APRA and for the transitional government. The small grants program works in targeted geographic areas to support activities that offer a tangible “peace dividend.” Through these grants, OTI has encouraged citizen participation in the peace process and enabled the rehabilitation of basic community infrastructure. ■



OTI Supports First Peace Rally in Burundi

Despite pouring rain, some 25,000 Burundians turned out for the September 7, 2002 “Choose Peace” rally, kicking off a national peace and public education program in support of APRA. The rally, funded by OTI in conjunction with the transitional government, was broadcast live by radio to a national audience and later shown on state television.

In the weeks leading up to the rally, OTI supported a comprehensive advertising campaign undertaken by a local NGO. The campaign included radio announcements, posters, music, and roving trucks with large banners and loudspeakers. Over 10,000 leaflets were dropped from a helicopter over the capital. A local songwriter wrote 12 original peace songs in Kirundi that were performed at the rally.



Participants at an OTI-sponsored peace rally in Burundi.

Due to the rain, three scheduled testimonials were taped and broadcast the next day. The first was from the father of Cyprien Ntaryamira, the democratically elected president whose death was the catalyst for genocide in 1993. Over 80 years old, Mr. Ndadaye told the crowd that his son would not have wanted the killing that followed. To honor his son, Mr. Ndadaye said, the country must choose peace.

The second testimonial came from a community leader whose multiethnic village chose to live in peace throughout the fighting. When the genocide started, this leader, a Hutu, called together his neighbors, many of whom were Tutsis. He told them that they could kill each other, as others in the country were doing at that time, or they could choose to continue living together peacefully, as they had done for years. They chose peace, and not one of them was killed during the entire genocide. In fact, the rebels came to realize that if they tried to incite violence in that community, the entire population—both Hutu and Tutsi—would join together against the rebels. As a result, the community was left unharmed.

Finally, a former rebel told his story. He said that while growing up, he played with Tutsi children and went to school with them. But when a Tutsi killed his mother, he decided that he would become a rebel and fight against all Tutsis. Later, he became disenchanted with the rebel leadership who sent young people like himself to fight and die for a cause they could not explain. After several years, he decided to stop fighting and start talking. It is better, he said, to learn to understand one another than to try to win by force.

COLOMBIA

Program Facts

Duration: Jan 99–Dec 01

FY2001 Budget: \$3.6 million

Objectives: Strengthen role of NGOs involved in the peace process; promote democratic participation and effective local governance; help reintegrate child ex-combatants

Partners: International Organization for Migration; Salesian Missions; International Committee of the Red Cross; Georgetown and Javeriana Universities

Background

In 1998, following the election of President Andres Pastrana, the Colombian government reinvigorated a process to end the 50-year-old conflict with armed insurgent groups. “Plan Colombia,” as President Pastrana called it, was a window of opportunity to advance the peace process.

OTI initiated a program in Colombia in January 1999 to open lines of communication and foster dialogue between the government, civil society, and neglected communities. Over the next 18 months, OTI funded three projects: technical assistance to the government to establish a framework for peace negotiations; support for small infrastructure projects to help communities integrate internally displaced people; and a revolving fund for small loans to rural farmers and entrepreneurs in areas of heavy rebel concentration. In June 2000, OTI restructured its program to dovetail with the strategy and priorities of the reestablished USAID mission.

Activities

Supporting Community Initiatives for Peace

OTI provided small grants of under \$50,000 to local organizations with innovative projects to promote peace and reconciliation. For example, OTI supported *Medios para la Paz* (Media for Peace), a Colombian NGO dedicated to depoliticizing journalism, avoiding manipulation of the media by armed actors, and desensationalizing the conflict. The grant to *Medios* supported the training of journalism students throughout the country. OTI also provided a grant to the National



In Colombia, an OTI-supported radio station broadcasts news and information.

Nurses’ Association (ANEC) to develop policies and procedures to better serve survivors of sexual violence. As a result, 90 regional representatives were trained and three regional networks were created to monitor and respond to this problem and build public awareness.

Reintegrating Child Soldiers

In March 2001, OTI initiated a program to meet the needs of children who had experienced wartime trauma and lacked the education and skills to readjust to family life. Working in concert with the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Colombian Family Welfare Institute), OTI supported the opening of specialized treatment centers for ex-combatant children, funding local NGOs to provide adjunct services such as psychosocial counseling and vocational training. Approximately 450 children received assistance in the first year, after which time the Colombian government assumed full responsibility for funding the centers. In addition, OTI helped establish a reception and evaluation center for newly demobilized child soldiers, a facility for family visits, and a series of half-way homes for children who had “graduated” from the specialized treatment centers but could not live with their families.

“Conducting development programs in conflict areas like Colombia is difficult and dangerous. OTI, however, demonstrated the experience and the expertise needed to deliver assistance to the most remote and conflictive parts of Colombia, and to succeed.”

George Wachtenheim

Former Mission Director, USAID/Colombia

Facilitating Peace Negotiations

When President Pastrana was elected, he pledged to revitalize talks with rebel forces on ending the conflict. However, his government had not yet developed a clear negotiating strategy or a platform on issues that were central to the demands of insurgent forces. OTI, working through Georgetown and Javeriana Universities, helped organize a series of roundtable discussions, workshops, and forums that brought together academics, community leaders, and government officials to develop a framework for negotiations.

Assisting Displaced Persons

Although an estimated 2.1 million Colombians have been displaced by the conflict (and up to a million more have left the country), social and economic stigmatization of displaced persons has made it difficult to clearly identify and assist this population. OTI, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Salesian Missions, supported small infrastructure projects in communities where internal migration was straining resources and generating social tensions. In addition, OTI designed and managed an overall program for the USAID mission for meeting the needs of IDPs and helping them to become economically integrated into their host communities. ■

Reintegrating Former Child Combatants

An estimated 3,000 to 7,000 child soldiers are serving in Colombia's three largest armed rebel groups. The successful reintegration of those escaping from their units or captured by government forces present significant challenges. The children are often functionally illiterate, have few vocational skills, bear physical and emotional scars, and are seen by the Colombian legal system as criminals. Many are from abusive homes and cannot return to their families.

OTI's reintegration program, implemented by the International Organization for Migration in coordination with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, established a three-stage process for assisting and reintegrating the children. In the first stage, children were evaluated by psychologists and social workers to determine their needs. Whenever possible, children were reunited with their families and offered additional psychosocial or educational assistance. Otherwise, they were cared for in small residential facilities.

Casa Buendia, which hosted up to 25 children at a time, was one of five centers sponsored by OTI during the first year of the program. Situated just outside Bogotá, *Casa Buendia* provided a secure, tranquil environment where children could learn appropriate skills and develop community values. A social network was created so that local experts could provide specialized attention to address each child's needs, whether for medical treatment, counseling, education, or life skills. Members of the social network maintained contact with the children after they left the centers, monitoring their progress and ensuring they received followup assistance as necessary. To address the legal obstacles to reintegration, OTI undertook a comprehensive review of Colombian laws pertaining to children and ex-combatants. This review led to the development of special training for Judges of Minors and Public Defenders, as well as to legislation allowing the decriminalization of former child soldiers.

Through this program, OTI helped to rehabilitate severely traumatized children and improve the government's responsiveness and effectiveness. The program also strengthened the capacity of local NGOs and helped build linkages between government and civil society.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Program Facts

Duration: Jul 02–Sep 04

FY2002 Budget: \$3.3 million

Objectives: Increase access to information representing diverse perspectives; increase participation of civil society in decisionmaking on national issues; expand and strengthen linkages between communities

Partners: CARE, *Fondation Hirondelle*, Search for Common Ground

Background

After more than 30 years of one-party rule by the corrupt and brutal former President Mobutu Sese Seko, the Democratic Republic of Congo (then known as Zaire) was plunged into conflict when war and genocide spilled over from neighboring Rwanda. Mobutu fled the country as an armed coalition, led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila and funded by the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, marched toward the capital.

In May 1997, Kabila declared himself president, consolidated power, and renamed the country. A year of relative peace ended abruptly in August 1998 with the start of “Africa’s First World War.” At the height of the conflict, nine neighboring countries had troops in the DRC. A 1999 ceasefire accord failed to be implemented and a proposed Inter-Congolese Dialogue was repeatedly delayed and frustrated, although a UN peacekeeping mission known as MONUC was deployed. After Kabila was assassinated on January 16, 2001, his son Joseph assumed power. Joseph Kabila demonstrated a greater commitment to moving toward dialogue, although the transition to democracy and peace is not yet assured.

One of the greatest impediments to the Congolese peace process is the isolation of regions and villages. Their inhabitants are spread over almost 400,000 square miles in a country with virtually no func-

tional transportation and or telecommunication systems. The occupying military forces have plundered Congo’s great natural resource wealth and terrorized its civilian inhabitants, many of whom have died from war-related famine, preventable illness, and armed attack. With few opportunities for exchanging views, the possibilities for establishing a broader countrywide dialogue about the future of the Congo and for engaging local communities in reconciliation are limited.

To address these problems, OTI initiated a national, multifaceted communications strategy that will foster exchanges on dialogue, conflict prevention, and the engagement of average Congolese in decisions on issues of national importance. An earlier OTI program in Congo, from 1998 to 2001, was closed when the conflict resumed and the transition stalled.

Activities

Increasing Access to Information

OTI is supporting a radio station known as Radio Okapi to increase availability of and access to balanced and accurate reporting. The station was initially established by MONUC and run by an independent civic organization, *Fondation Hirondelle*. OTI’s assistance has extended Radio Okapi’s broadcast capability by providing two transmitters and four new relay stations to assure continuous broadcasts. Radio Okapi’s local language radio programs disseminate information about humanitarian assistance, the peace

Refugees
International warns
of “slow-motion
holocaust” in eastern
DRC

January

OTI assessment
team sent to
DRC

April

OTI begins
DRC program

May

Government lifts
ban on political
activity

June

Media specialist hired
for Radio Okapi

July

Rwanda and DRC sign
treaty to end war

September

Uganda and DRC
sign peace accord

2002

process, and demobilization and reintegration, while engaging Congolese citizens in discussions of key transition issues. Working with the NGO Search for Common Ground, OTI funded a radio producer to enhance coverage of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement (DDRRR) activities. The new programming is designed to assist the DDRRR process by expanding greater public awareness, encouraging participation of former soldiers, and building confidence in the peace process. Before the programs began, many combatants were unaware of the assistance program that helps them transition to civilian life and return to their home countries.

Increasing Civil Society's Participation in Decisionmaking

Through small grants administered by CARE, OTI offers direct material and technical support to national and local groups undertaking innovative peace-building and civil society projects. OTI-sponsored activities provide ways for civil society organizations to enhance their outreach and participation in decisionmaking, develop skills needed for advocacy, and connect to like-minded organizations throughout the country.

Expanding and Strengthening Linkages Between Communities

OTI's partnership with *Fondation Hirondelle* and CARE aims to expand and strengthen linkages between isolated communities. OTI supports activities

that encourage conflict resolution through community infrastructure repairs and small-scale economic development projects that engage ex-combatants and other community members. ■

Uniting the Country Through Radio

In a country where millions of inhabitants outside the capital are starved for news and information, Radio Okapi, a station established by the United Nations, now reaches the entire country, broadcasting 24 hours a day on FM and shortwave frequencies. In September 2002, the station launched a new daily program dedicated to Congolese on all sides of the war, with OTI support through *Fondation*

Hirondelle. Citizens submit messages to Radio Okapi for family and friends with whom they may have lost contact during the war. Throughout the country, the program runs live, at 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and is repeated at 10 a.m. the following day.

An additional program, *Dialogue entre Congolais* (Dialogue Among Congolese), was restructured to include more contributions from various regions. Producer Vianney Missumbi travels around the country and utilizes recorded feed from regional producers to widen the on-air dialogue.

News flashes were added to the daily lineup to increase the amount of spoken word on the air and give listeners an opportunity at midmorning and midafternoon to be updated on the main news stories. *Okapi Reportage* (Okapi Report), an in-depth program focusing on and rotating among the 10 provinces, covers topics in current affairs with a human interest angle.

As one Radio Okapi listener commented, "Radio Okapi has unified the Congo electronically.... I believe the radio has made a real contribution to the exchange of information and dialogue among Congolese everywhere." OTI funding not only enabled the hiring of staff and the purchase of equipment, but also supported a one-month training workshop to increase the quality of programming.



Congolese journalists broadcast local news from the Radio Okapi studio in Kisangani.

Peace accord signed
in Pretoria

December

OTI supports media
coverage of Pretoria
peace negotiations

January

OTI opens field office
in eastern DRC

2003

EAST TIMOR (TIMOR LESTE)

Program Facts

Duration: Nov 99–Oct 02

FY2001 Budget: \$9.8 million

FY2002 Budget: \$6.1 million

Objectives: Empower civil society to play a role in relief, reconstruction, and nationbuilding; build independent media; assist reintegration of ex-combatants; strengthen government and NGO capacity for policy development, analysis, and advocacy

Partners: Development Alternatives, Inc.; Internews; International Organization for Migration; National Democratic Institute

“The OTI experience in Timor Leste offers a potential model for USAID programming in a nonpresence country.”

USAID/Indonesia handover cable on the OTI Timor Leste program

Background

Rather than preparing East Timor for self-governance, years of Indonesian occupation left the island with a largely unskilled populace and weak indigenous institutions. Following its vote for independence in August 1999, East Timor was ravaged by Indonesian security forces, causing great human suffering and massive social, economic, and administrative disruption. There was no USAID mission in East Timor, and international donors were slow to respond to the crisis. OTI began its activities in November 1999, addressing not only the emergency needs for basic infrastructure but also the longer-term requirements for political development. Over the next three years, during East Timor’s transition to full independence, OTI worked in concert with the UN peacekeeping operation and the UN transitional administration (UNTAET) to help secure a political, social, and economic environment conducive to democracy.

Activities

Promoting Economic Recovery

From March through August 2000, OTI implemented the Transitional Employment Program (TEP), which provided short-term employment for over 60,000 Timorese, rehabilitated public facilities, and supported small community-based initiatives. A follow-on program funded 60 small-scale reconstruction projects and provided

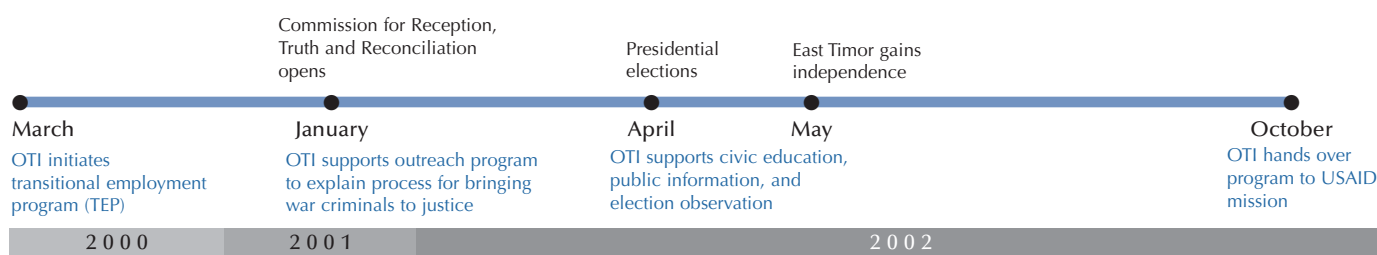
in-kind support for income-producing cooperatives. According to an independent assessment by the USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, there was “widespread agreement ... that TEP had major positive effects, jumpstarting the process of engaging the East Timorese in meaningful public works efforts in all 13 districts and in rebuilding their country in the aftermath of the conflict.”

Fostering Economic Growth

To expand access to banking services, OTI financed a feasibility assessment to reintroduce nationwide, market-based, sustainable financial services for the “unbanked” majority in East Timor. Throughout most of 2002, OTI worked to strengthen financial infrastructure and microfinance, build and improve rural and agricultural markets, and encourage private sector development.

Building Independent Media

OTI was the leading media supporter in East Timor, providing over \$2 million in grants to increase the flow of information to communities. OTI sought to develop credible, responsible, and sustainable media outlets and supported civic efforts to fill critical information gaps. In addition, OTI funded the production and distribution of a series of videos aimed at providing refugee communities in West Timor with accurate information about their home villages, thus assisting their voluntary return.





Two years after post-referendum violence destroyed much of the country, East Timorese line up on August 30, 2001, to elect a Constituent Assembly.

Strengthening Civil Society

OTI sought to increase civil society's participation in the political transition and promote the development of a peaceful and democratic nation. To this end, OTI supported organizations and community groups engaged in voter and civic education, election monitoring, property mediation, political reconciliation, human rights, advocacy training, and good governance. For example, OTI awarded a grant to the Higher Institute of Economics and Management to develop a civic education manual on basic principles of democracy in the Bahasa Indonesia and Tetum languages. Six hundred students were trained and then deployed to all the subdistricts of the country to prepare local communities for the consultative process on drafting the new constitution.

Advancing Good Governance

To bolster East Timor's political institutions, OTI worked with members of Parliament to increase their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. OTI also sponsored educational workshops for the

parliamentary press office and supported an advisor to the president's office.

Reintegrating Demobilized Soldiers

In 2001, OTI collaborated with the World Bank, the International Organization for Migration, the Timor Leste Defense Force, and the Falintil High Command to provide reintegration assistance to former resistance fighters who wanted to demobilize or who had not been selected for the new defense force. The 1,300 beneficiaries received training to reenter civilian life, as well as safety net payments and access to grant funds for starting businesses.

Improving Civilian Oversight of the Military

In 2002, OTI supported a program through the National Democratic

Human Rights Training for Special Police Unit

In the wake of the massive destruction following East Timor's vote for independence from Indonesia in 1999, the United Nations and the Timorese community had to reconstitute the essential institutions of governance, including the judicial system and the police force. The Timor Leste Police Service was one of the first public symbols of the new nation-state. OTI supported training on human rights and conflict mediation for the 190 officers of Timor Leste's Special Police Unit. The series of three-day courses in Dili and Baucau educated officers in techniques for diffusing potentially violent situations through verbal means, as well as in the practical applications of international human rights standards. The courses generated considerable discussion about the situations police officers face and the range of responses available to them. These courses were designed in coordination with technical advisors from the UN Civilian Police and the Timor Leste Police Academy.

Institute to build civilian capacity for oversight of the military and promote understanding of their respective roles. OTI activities sought to ensure that Timorese civil servants, parliamentarians, and civil society developed the appropriate skills and understanding for security policymaking and democratic control of the uniformed services.

Expanding the Rule of Law

OTI supported efforts to build the basic institutions that uphold the rule of law, protect internationally recognized human rights, and further citizens' understanding of and access to the justice system. OTI funded independent legal aid groups, infrastructure and equipment for the formal justice system, training courses, and a wide range of public education and information programs on human rights, the police, and the legal system. ■

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Program Facts

Duration: May 01–Oct 03

FY2001 Budget: \$918,000

FY2002 Budget: \$10.4 million

Objectives: Support positive, community-based interaction among diverse groups; promote citizen participation in community decisionmaking; foster transparency, responsiveness, and accountability in the relationship between citizens and local government; increase access to balanced information and diverse points of view

Partners: International Organization for Migration

Background

Unlike other former republics of Yugoslavia, Macedonia remained relatively calm as the country broke apart, achieving independence peacefully in 1991. In spite of ethnic tensions—particularly between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians—Macedonia avoided violent conflict through the 1990s. However, political and economic pressures took their toll, exacerbated by violent conflict in neighboring Kosovo.

Fighting broke out between the Macedonian military and a newly formed ethnic Albanian insurgent group in late February 2001. Six months later, an estimated 30,000 civilians were displaced, shops and homes were destroyed, a once expanding economy was in decline, and ethnic tensions remained high. A country that had been called “the last, best hope for the Balkans” because of its potential for peaceful, multiethnic democracy was threatening to destabilize the entire region.

In August 2001, parties to the conflict signed an internationally brokered Framework Agreement. It ended hostilities and heralded a new era of political reform, including greater decentralization and increased minority representation. One month after ratification of the Framework Agreement, OTI launched its Confidence Building Initiative (CBI) to mitigate political and ethnic tensions and allow time for promised political reforms to be implemented. Although

OTI focused its immediate response on the hardest hit regions of Tetovo and Kumanovo, it later expanded its work to 77 of the most conflict-prone municipalities, with separate strategies for each of five regions: Skopje, Tetovo, Kicevo, Kocani, and Bitola.

Activities

Promoting Community Initiatives

To facilitate positive, community-based interaction among diverse groups of people and encourage citizen participation in community decisionmaking, OTI supported 210 multiethnic initiatives through small grants in its first year alone. During FY2002, approximately 5,000 people were directly involved in identifying, designing, and implementing these local projects, while tens of thousands participated in and benefited from them. Projects included small-scale infrastructure reconstruction, such as repair of schools and clinics; removal of hate graffiti; rehabilitation of parks, cultural centers, and recreation facilities to promote positive social interaction between groups; and multicultural events such as volunteer cleanup days, concerts, sports competitions, dance performances, summer camps, and art exhibitions. OTI-funded projects brought together different age groups, ethnic groups, and members of opposing political parties, some for the first time since the conflict. By providing immediate, tangible signs of peace and progress at the community level, OTI worked to make hope a reality.

Armed conflict
breaks out

March

April
OTI fields
assessment
team

May
OTI provides
reconstruction
funds

July
USAID staff evacuate
due to threats against
the U.S. Embassy

Peace deal reached

August

September
USAID staff
return

October
OTI launches
Confidence Building
Initiative (CBI)

New constitution
approved

November

2001

Fostering Transparency, Responsiveness, and Accountability in Local Governance

To foster greater transparency, responsiveness, and accountability of local government officials and expand the role of citizens in public decisionmaking, OTI sponsored more than 1,000 town hall gatherings and community meetings in FY2002. OTI held dialogues with village officials, residents, NGOs, local businesses, and others to identify and address local priorities.

Throughout this process, OTI worked to ensure that communities were fairly represented in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and political affiliation. Once consensus was reached, OTI staff helped to develop projects in ways that maximized the community's own contribution.

While some communities contributed direct funding, others provided in-kind assistance such as labor, materials, space, or equipment. As a result of this facilitated cooperation, OTI helped build trust and confidence among diverse groups and between local government officials and citizens. Most of these groups otherwise would not have had a reason to come together. OTI helped inform citizens of their rights and responsibilities, while fostering accountability among local government officials.

Encouraging Tolerance through Media

To provide positive messages and

Women as Peace Builders

What began as a grassroots peace march evolved into a political force to be reckoned with. In March 2002, ethnic Albanian, Turkish, Roma, and Macedonian women came together under banners in each language proclaiming “Together We Are Stronger.” They marched down the main street of Bitola, a once peaceful and



To mark International Women's Day, ethnic Albanian, Turkish, Roma, and Macedonian women march together to promote peace and ethnic tolerance under banners proclaiming “Together We Are Stronger.”

prosperous city in the southwest that was torn apart by ethnic riots during the conflict. Buoyed by the success of the OTI-sponsored event, the women's groups formed a regional coalition and spearheaded a large-scale campaign across the southwest to promote the role of women in politics. More than 2,000 women participated in a coordinated effort to ensure that more female candidates stood for election. The campaign contributed to the remarkable results of the September 2002 elections: the number of female members of Parliament more than doubled, from nine to 21.

balanced information to help counter the hostile media environment that contributed to the conflict, OTI worked with local media organizations to create messages of peace and ethnic reconciliation. OTI supported the dissemination of diverse points of view to large groups of people. Projects included radio and television shows, newspaper advertisements, billboard campaigns, and cultural events where prominent local artists spoke out in favor of ethnic tolerance. For instance, OTI funded the printing and promotion costs of a multi-ethnic student newspaper produced in

the Macedonian and Albanian languages in Tetovo high schools. The paper is published every two weeks and distributed to more than 9,800 students at seven high schools. The newspaper project, developed in response to a recent school conflict, highlights common interests and promotes inclusive activities. ■

“[OTI] shared a hand with us, united us, and showed us a path for coexistence, unity, and tolerance. Now, together, we're stronger in accomplishing our goals for peace, equity, and diversity.”

The Women's Regional Network of Southern Macedonia

First decentralization law passed

January

OTI initiates community meetings to increase participation in local decisionmaking

Free and fair elections held

July

OTI begins election assistance

September

2002

INDONESIA

Program Facts

Duration: Jul 98–Nov 02

FY2001 Budget: \$4.9 million

FY2002 Budget: \$6.7 million

Objectives: Support civil society efforts to address conflicts through dialogue and mediation; encourage accountable, transparent governance; strengthen capacity of media to cover political processes; improve civilian oversight and control of the military

Partners: Development Alternatives, Inc.; Internews; National Democratic Institute; International Committee of the Red Cross; The Asia Foundation; PACT; LP3ES

Background

In May 1998, Indonesia's prospects for a peaceful transition to democratic rule appeared tenuous. Widespread rioting had terminated former President Suharto's 32-year autocratic rule, but his successor, B.J. Habibie, showed questionable commitment to reform. Opposition groups were divided over the steps needed for political change. Strikes paralyzed the capital, exacerbating the impact of the Asia-wide economic crisis, and ethnic and religious strife was at the highest levels in decades.

It was against this backdrop that OTI entered Indonesia in 1998. Despite substantial challenges, OTI saw unique opportunities for supporting Indonesia's democratic transition and quickly identified five sectors where short-term assistance could have the greatest impact. These areas included helping civil society groups advocate reform, encouraging the media to stimulate discussion on political issues, supporting transparent governance initiatives, improving civilian-military relations, and assisting in preparations for the general elections scheduled for June 1999. Later in the program, when democratic institutions were better established and more donors were engaged in rule of law activities, OTI shifted its strategy toward addressing emerging ethnic conflicts that were dividing communities and tearing apart the nation.

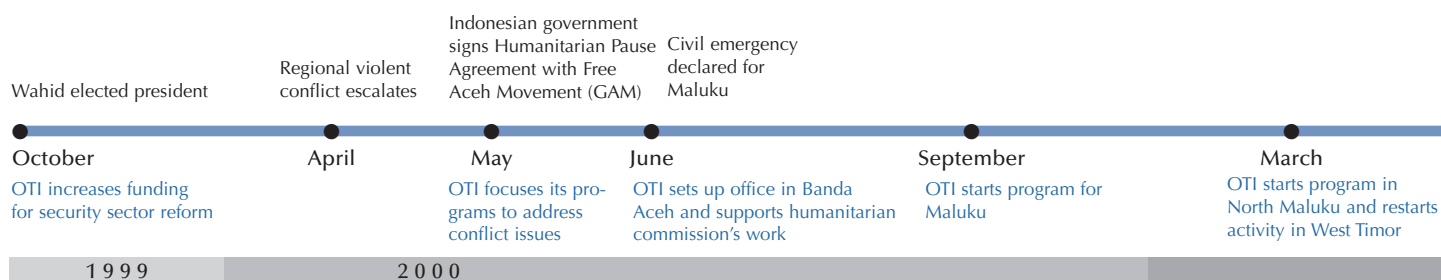


Stakeholders gather to develop a social safety net monitoring system in Lombok, Indonesia. This community-based pilot program was replicated in other parts of the country.

Activities

Mitigating and Managing Conflicts

During 2001 and 2002, OTI developed targeted programming in regions where conflict or increased potential for violence threatened national stability. Through media support, good governance initiatives, and reconstruction projects, OTI worked to transform violent conflict into peaceful dialogue and meaningful reform in crisis areas such as Aceh, Papua, West Timor, Maluku, North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi. Within each geographic area, OTI worked with community groups, international organizations, media entities, universities, and local government bodies to design activities in response to the local situation and specific needs. Activities included supporting community-identified priorities for rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure and public buildings; underwriting public information cam-



“OTI has had a remarkable run, both in Indonesia and in East Timor. In Indonesia, 982 grants (nearly \$30 million) enabled USAID/Jakarta to play a leading role in political development during critical early years following the fall of President Suharto”

*The Honorable Ralph “Skip” Boyce
U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia*

paigms that addressed key issues such as decentralization and government accountability; providing conflict management skills training for local change agents; sponsoring events to promote dialogue and positive interaction among dissenting parties and communities; and funding the development and dissemination of objective and noninflammatory media coverage.

Redefining the Role of the Military

Despite myriad challenges, the prospects for significant reform and restructuring of Indonesia’s military were viewed by experts as being better in 1999 and 2000 than at any time since the 1950s. In response to this opportunity, OTI established a civilian-military relations program that enabled Indonesian organizations to explore the appropriate role for Indonesia’s armed forces and to bring the military’s scope of responsibility in line with other modern armies. OTI’s goal was to encourage democratic, civilian

Women and Conflict Resolution in North Maluku

After a volcanic eruption in 1975, thousands of Muslims from one Indonesian island were transferred to a predominantly Christian area in what is now the province of North Maluku. Although the newcomers were initially welcomed, clashes arose in 1999 over a government decree transferring all land and resources to the Muslims. By 2000, there were thousands of casualties and over 200,000 displaced persons. Among all the suffering, women were particularly affected: in addition to witnessing and experiencing the violence, many lost husbands and sons and were struggling to provide for their families.

To aid the women of North Maluku and help resolve the conflicts, OTI supported a project of a local NGO, *Lembaga Mitra Lingkungan* (LML), to conduct training in conflict prevention and resolution for women in both Muslim and Christian communities. The goal of the activity was to enhance women’s roles as peace builders and increase their capacity to resolve conflicts. It was the first activity to engage women in mending the social fabric of North Maluku.

In addition to working with women, LML facilitated dialogue among individuals displaced by the conflict. The NGO empowered local residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to conduct effective advocacy for a comprehensive approach to peace, including addressing the needs of IDPs. LML assembled stakeholders to explore possible solutions for the return of those displaced to Ternate as a result of the communal conflict in North Maluku. The dialogue resulted in an action plan between the local government, UN agencies, and local and international NGOs on the return of displaced persons to their homes.

control of military forces by improving the capacity of civilian institutions—governmental and nongovernmental—to provide the requisite leadership, direction, management, and oversight. OTI worked with civilian organizations

in Jakarta and key provinces to design reform proposals that were subsequently considered by those in charge of restructuring the armed forces. ■

Sukarnoputri replaces
Wahid; special autonomy
law for Aceh

Special autonomy
law for Papua

Bali bombing

August

October

February

OTI intensifies its Papua and
Aceh programs to support
special autonomy laws

August

OTI continues support for
All-inclusive Dialogue
between GOI and GAM

October

OTI begins Bali
recovery program

2001

2002

KOSOVO

Program Facts

Duration: Jul 99–Sep 01

FY2001 Budget: \$6.6 million

FY2002 Budget: \$370,000

Objectives: Encourage moderate and democratic local leadership; help communities rebuild local infrastructure; increase diversity and professionalism in media; build transparency in governance

Partners: Ronco Consulting Corporation; International Organization for Migration

Background

Kosovo has long been a particularly contentious area within the volatile Balkans. Although the population is overwhelmingly Albanian, ethnic Serbs have historic and religious claims to the province. In 1989, the Milosevic regime revoked Kosovo's political autonomy, unleashing years of nonviolent protest and ultimately the emergence of an Albanian guerilla movement, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). As the confrontation between the KLA and Serb authorities escalated, increasing numbers of Albanian civilians fled their villages. International mediation failed to produce an agreement and, in the spring of 1999, NATO launched a bombing campaign. OTI began a program-in-exile in the refugee camps in Macedonia, preparing the way for the refugees' return.

After Serb forces withdrew and air strikes were halted in June 1999, the United Nations established a protectorate in Kosovo. Overwhelming numbers of Kosovar refugees, accompanied by NATO forces and other international organizations, began returning to their devastated communities. An OTI team was among the first group of non-NATO officials to enter Kosovo. Building on contacts developed before the bombing and during the program-in-exile, OTI quickly established seven field offices throughout Kosovo and began issuing small grants. OTI's primary goal was to maximize the number of Kosovars involved in, and

recognizing the value of, participating in decisionmaking and the future development of democracy in Kosovo.

Activities

Building the Foundations for Local Governance

By organizing town hall meetings, OTI encouraged the development of representative Community Improvement Councils (CICs) composed of 12 to 15 people who reflected the political and social diversity of the local population. OTI provided the material resources for rehabilitation after a CIC identified priority rehabilitation needs—such as repairing a school or a road—and secured a local contribution to the project, often in the form of labor. OTI then leveraged additional funding for CIC projects from other donors, maximizing the impact of the program and winning local confidence in the democratic process.

The most important aspect of the CIC process was to engage Kosovars in an exercise of civic participation with real-life results. Helping neighbors learn to work together in a participatory, democratic, and constructive manner was the primary purpose of developing the CICs, but communities also benefited in other ways. Because of their success in responding to real local needs and priorities, CICs emerged as de facto representatives of the diverse interests in communities, serving as liaisons with international agencies and bilateral

UN establishes protectorate in Kosovo

July
OTI launches program in Kosovo

September
OTI supports 25 election-related projects

First free and fair local elections in Kosovo

October
130 CIC members run for local office

December
OTI begins working with newly elected municipal authorities to promote dialogue between constituents and local officials

1999

2000

donors. This role was particularly important prior to the municipal elections of October 2000, as no formal structures existed for Kosovars to participate in self-governance. Once those structures were created, OTI began helping CICs link to municipal authorities.

Specifically, OTI encouraged community-municipal relationships by supporting the joint implementation of priority reconstruction projects and promoting transparency and accountability in public policy formation and resource allocation.

Strengthening Civil Society

OTI worked at the grassroots level to enhance the role of NGOs and other civil society institutions in Kosovo's economic and political development. Independent groups mobilizing around issues such as human rights, religious tolerance, and women's empowerment received crucial start-up assistance. OTI helped them organize activities such as town hall meetings, public hearings, and educational events. A network of civic-minded individuals, local NGO associations, and media outlets was established to contribute to an election awareness campaign throughout the province. OTI supported get-out-the-vote efforts, call-in shows, youth forums, roundtable discussions, and electoral debates, many of which were unprecedented in Kosovo and received wide media coverage. These activities contributed to high voter turnout and minimal violence in the October 2000 municipal elections.

Kosovo Antiviolence Campaign

OTI supported a massive antiviolence campaign across Kosovo led by a local NGO known as The Forum, a collection of open-minded, dynamic young Kosovars committed to engaging youth constructively and responsibly in civic affairs. The campaign called for an end to the physical intimidation and brutal attacks that had contributed to a continuing cycle of vengeance. The five-month campaign reached every corner of Kosovo through weekly television shows, awareness-raising events, electronic and print public service announcements, posters, and buttons. Its message captured the attention of the international press. In a Reuters piece, Forum cofounder

Jetemir Balaj explained that the campaign encouraged Kosovars to take responsibility for stopping all forms of violence by promulgating the slogan *Boll Ma!* (Enough!). At a press conference in Kosovo in May 2001, visiting U.S. Ambassador James Pardew and Christopher Dell, head of the U.S. Office in Pristina, demonstrated their support for the effort by wearing *Boll Ma!* buttons and displaying a campaign T-shirt. The press conference was widely covered by local media outlets, helping to spread the message of nonviolence and ethnic tolerance.



The campaign "Boll Ma!" (Enough!) encouraged Kosovars to take responsibility for stopping all forms of violence in the province.

Developing Free and Independent Media

OTI focused considerable attention on developing media outlets in Kosovo, providing them with assistance to ensure that professional, moderate, and high-quality reporting was available to as many Kosovars as possible. Staff worked closely with newspapers, radio stations, and television studios to help them understand their role in civil society, practice that role responsibly, and contribute to their local communities. Media

projects included rebuilding infrastructure for radio and television broadcasts and assisting the first independent Albanian-language radio station in Kosovo, as well as supporting community radio and newspaper outlets across Kosovo. OTI-sponsored community affairs programs heightened Kosovar awareness of important issues and events, created an environment conducive to the free and open exchange of opinions, and helped hold elected officials accountable to their constituencies. ■

May

OTI leverages \$1.6 million from local communities and other donors

September

OTI closes offices after completing 693 projects

2001

LEBANON

Program Facts

Duration: Sep 99–Nov 01

FY2001 Budget: \$1.2 million

Objectives: Increase public awareness of the costs of corruption; strengthen investigative journalism; foster transparency and accountability at the municipal government level; promote anticorruption efforts by local groups

Partners: International Center for Journalists; Saatchi & Saatchi; SUNY-Albany's Center for Legislative Development; AMIDEAST

Background

Lebanon's 16-year civil war that began in 1975 claimed 100,000 lives, caused an equal number of injuries, and led to the displacement of nearly 20 percent of the country's prewar population. In 1992, a new parliament was democratically elected, and Lebanon began the arduous process of reconstruction. Many sectarian tensions remained and progress was slow.

In November 1998, newly elected President Emile Lahoud launched an anticorruption initiative, promising to make rule of law and clean government keystones of his administration. The president's commitment and strong public support represented a critical opportunity to institutionalize good governance in Lebanon. In close cooperation with USAID/Lebanon, OTI initiated an anticorruption program in September 1999. The overall strategy was to counter popular apathy and build a national mandate for transparency in business, government, and the media by providing the information, skills, tools, and resources for Lebanese citizens to resist corruption.

Activities

Anticorruption Media Campaign

With OTI support, the advertising firm Saatchi & Saatchi built on research and polling by the Lebanese NGO Information International to create and

implement a nationwide multimedia campaign. It focused on the costs of corruption to the average citizen and identified specific steps that citizens could take to fight it. The campaign used vivid images on TV, radio, and billboards to jar people out of their tolerance of bribery and financial misconduct.

Municipal Government Assistance

OTI partnered with an ongoing USAID/Lebanon municipal governance program to offer financial assistance to two large municipalities to computerize their information, streamline their systems, create one-stop shops for citizens to conduct their municipal business, and develop websites to explain the new procedures. In light of the success of the program, OTI was able to leverage the support of the Government of Lebanon on a national scale. Nationwide implementation of this program was important: while OTI created the demand for anticorruption reform through its media campaign and investigative journalism training, it was vital to provide the government with a concrete way to respond to those demands.

Investigative Journalism Training

OTI funded the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) to conduct two investigative journalism training courses for newspaper reporters in Lebanon. ICFJ conducted the first course for 70 journalists from January to March 2000. In November 2000, ICFJ brought 12 of those journalists to the United States for



45 days of training, including working visits to U.S. newspapers. In March 2001, ICJF began the second course for 30 journalists in Lebanon. The purpose of the training was to increase skills in conducting comprehensive, evidence-based, and accurate reporting of important public issues, avoiding sensationalism and miscommunication.

“[USAID/Lebanon] would have missed a lot without the OTI programs. To be able to carry these forward is a tribute to the way it went. Without OTI, we would have been a lot further behind.”

Jon Breslar

Former Mission Director, USAID/Lebanon
March 2001

Small Grants Program

Together with the USAID mission, OTI created a small grants mechanism to support efforts by local groups aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in government at municipal and national levels. The program created public-private partnerships by supporting activities that encouraged constructive interaction between government and citizens. ■

Anticorruption Activities in Lebanon



Kulluna Massoul, a citizen group, spearheaded efforts to combat corruption in Lebanon.

One of the greatest obstacles to combating corruption in Lebanon was that people accepted it as a normal and inevitable price of doing business. In May 1999, OTI began planning a media campaign designed to illuminate the costs of corruption to the Lebanese people. Rather than sponsoring an effort it designed, OTI gathered a group of prominent Lebanese citizens and NGO members to conceptualize and present the campaign. The consultative group took the name *Kulluna Massoul* (We Are All Responsible). To provide a factual basis for the campaign, OTI funded a Lebanese firm, Information International, to study the costs of corruption in Lebanon. Based on this report, the Lebanese branch of Saatchi & Saatchi, with funding from OTI, began producing the media campaign in August 1999. The first phase consisted of television and radio spots, newspaper advertisements,

and billboards; the theme was that the Lebanese were destroying their children's future by not fighting against corruption. The second phase of the campaign, in October and November 2000, included a media spot in which college students talked about what corruption meant to them and what could be done to stop it. The media campaign was the first of its kind, succeeding in broadening public debate about the effects of, and responsibility for, corruption. It was widely credited with taking the issue out of the political realm and bringing it to the citizens. Said Jamil Mroue, editor of Lebanon's *Daily Star*, "The campaign put corruption on the map as a current viable subject to talk about. It is now not so alien to say that we need to work on corruption. That was not the case before. Now it is on the agenda."

March

Small grants program begins;
OTI hands over to the USAID
mission

2001

NIGERIA

Program Facts

Duration: Feb 99–Jan 02

FY2001 Budget: \$6 million

Objectives: Support civil society efforts to mitigate conflict; promote development of a conflict management infrastructure; encourage reform of the national police

Partners: Louis Berger Group, Inc; Management Systems International; Institute of World Affairs; U.S. Department of Justice/International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program; U.S. Department of Energy

Background

The sudden death in June 1998 of Nigeria's military head of state, Sani Abacha, and his successor's unexpected transfer of power to a civilian government set off a much anticipated democratic transition in Africa's most populous country. Working in concert with other parts of USAID and the U.S. Government, OTI placed initial priority on sustaining the momentum toward reestablishment of civilian democratic rule. In the weeks after the February 1999 elections, OTI mobilized a training program that helped prepare 10,000 newly elected officials at federal, state, and local levels for their roles and responsibilities in building a democratic Nigeria. Combined with extensive media coverage, this program helped reassure the country that the civilian government was indeed ready to assume power.

Once President Olusegun Obasanjo was inaugurated in May 1999, OTI initiated a nationwide good governance program. From its offices in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano, OTI supported efforts to build transparency and accountability, broaden civic participation, and stabilize democratic institutions. To help reestablish civilian control of the military, OTI provided specialized technical assistance to develop a joint action plan for strengthening civilian oversight of the downsized and restructured military. A similar strategy was initiated to contribute to the reform and

professionalization of the Nigerian police.

In late 1999 and early 2000, Nigeria was rocked by serious internal conflicts. Ethnic and religious rivalries erupted into open violence, causing cycles of retribution and mass displacement. OTI responded by quickly developing a countrywide program to help communities better understand the sources of their disputes and to empower them to resolve or manage them.

Activities

Mitigating and Managing Conflict

Based on the belief that communities with the right resources are capable of managing and resolving their conflicts, OTI assisted NGOs seeking to defuse conflicts that had become or were likely to become violent. Conducted in partnership with over 90 Nigerian NGOs, these interventions included facilitating dialogues, third-party consultations, joint problem-solving workshops, and peace commissions. OTI-supported efforts succeeded in lowering tensions, reducing violence, and promoting peace in communities across the country.

Given the high potential for violence in Lagos, Kaduna, and Kano, OTI and its local partners devised strategies to build ethnic and religious tolerance and enable peaceful dispute resolution in each state. The centerpiece of each strategy was to identify key opinion leaders and deci-



sionmakers and provide them with basic conflict management skills. These stakeholders were then brought together to establish a statewide peace committee to provide advice to the governor and serve as a forum for dialogue across ethnic, religious, or occupational divides.

To increase the number of well-trained and practiced facilitators, OTI supported the provision of basic conflict management skills to over 8,000 Nigerians, including government officials, traditional and religious leaders, and members of civic organizations. In addition, OTI assisted in the creation of CRESNET, a national network that serves as a self-sustaining resource for conflict mitigation. OTI also helped create nine local Conflict Management Resource Centers, each with internet access and resource materials on peaceful dispute resolution. Since media can either fan the flames of conflict or serve as a force for moderation and mutual understanding, OTI also supported the development of a media guidebook and a series of workshops that provided journalists with basic conflict awareness, analysis, and reporting skills.

Broadening Public Dialogue

To build stable democracy in Nigeria, new and more inclusive avenues of dialogue and citizen engagement were needed. OTI focused its resources on initiatives to promote transparency and accountability in governance and on projects that engaged the Nigerian populace in discussion of key transition

Mitigating Conflict in Oke Ogun

A simmering conflict in Oke Ogun between Hausa cattle herders and their Yoruba neighbors caused repeated episodes of violence that resulted in the near total displacement of the Hausa community. OTI stepped in with a grant to a local conflict management organization to conduct introductory meetings with public officials of both communities. The grant also supported training workshops on conflict prevention and management for 80 participants on both sides.

As a direct result of this training, an inter-ethnic peace committee was formed. Its initial size had to be increased to accommodate the growing interest. The committee meets every month and has dealt with a variety of disputes with a potential for sparking violence. As a testament to the committee's importance, local governments have voted money to fund its continued existence. Since the inauguration of the committee, no interethnic conflict has arisen in the area.



OTI worked with communities to increase their ability to manage internal conflicts peacefully. OTI and a group of experienced Nigerian professionals devised a basic conflict management curriculum that was published in English, Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba.

issues—such as resource management; budgeting; and the balance of power among federal, state, and local authorities. OTI also supported enhanced media coverage of these issues and assisted in the development of programming to help the public critically analyze issues and engage in constructive dialogue with elected officials. ■

“The training armed us with knowledge on how to behave, resolve conflicts, and relate with the executive in a democratic setting....Before the training, relations with the executive arm of government were like a cat-and-mouse game, but after the training, we learnt how to dialogue, ask questions, and seek information.”

A. Oyemade

Member, Lagos State Assembly, after participating in an OTI-sponsored conflict management workshop

Mass violence in Nasarawa state

July

OTI supports mediation and information

September

OTI closes its offices

January

Handover of OTI conflict management program to USAID/Nigeria

2001

2002

PERU

Program Facts

Duration: Feb 01–Jan 03

FY2001 Budget: \$3.5 million

FY2002 Budget: \$7.6 million

Objectives: Enhance civilian oversight of the military; support transparency, accountability, and anticorruption efforts; build capacity of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; promote congressional reform

Partners: Creative Associates International, Inc.; National Democratic Institute

Background

Following the sudden collapse of the Fujimori regime in November 2000, USAID called on OTI to provide critical support for Peru's transition to democratic governance. In February 2001, OTI designed and initiated a two-year program, working closely with USAID, the U.S. Embassy, the Peruvian Government, NGOs, and other key stakeholders. To promote more participatory and transparent decisionmaking processes and increase responsiveness and accountability at all levels of government, OTI selected activity areas with the greatest potential impact on solidifying the democratic transition. OTI's experience in these areas—security sector reform, anticorruption, civic participation, and political decentralization—were seen as valuable additions to the overall program of the USAID mission in Lima. Since the inception of the program OTI has approved more than 240 grants, most under \$100,000.

Activities

Strengthening Civilian Oversight of the Military

In a country where the military ruled from 1968 to 1980, and military coups and interference by the armed forces in politics have been frequent, it was essential to build capacity for civilian, democratic control over the military. OTI responded by providing training and technical assistance to the Peruvian

Congress to support more informed, participatory decisionmaking on defense and national security. OTI assisted independent media to improve the quality and quantity of coverage of military-related issues, supported dialogue to encourage better communication and mutual understanding between civilian and military organizations, and funded civil society groups to expand their understanding of defense policy and their ability to monitor and advocate reform.

Improving the Functioning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Two decades of political turmoil and a violent insurgency left thousands of Peruvians dead or missing. In 2001, Peru's Government established a commission to investigate human rights abuses. OTI provided technical assistance and training to TRC members and staff, and to NGOs working in coordination with the TRC. OTI also helped support media advisors and other activities designed to ensure that the TRC's impact was maximized. For instance, OTI supported the production of a manual on effective investigation of mass graves. The manual was provided to judges and prosecutors seeking to interpret evidence from human remains in Ayacucho, the central Andean region most affected by political violence.

Assisting the Decentralization Process

To prepare localities to take on responsibilities that previously rested at the

President Fujimori resigns

November

OTI sends assessment team

February

OTI opens office

Presidential and congressional elections

April

May

OTI starts decentralization work

Truth and Reconciliation Commission established

June

OTI sponsors anticorruption conference; begins civilian-military program

President and Congress sworn in

July

OTI trains newly elected legislators

2000

2001

national level, OTI supported public hearings and information campaigns to inform citizens about new budget and policy proposals and broaden participation in the policymaking process. OTI engaged local businesses, municipal officials, and advocacy groups in developing strategies for resource management, trade and regulatory reform, and attracting new industries. OTI also funded training workshops and policy seminars to build relationships and mechanisms for continuing cooperation.

Promoting Congressional Reform

For the first time in over a decade, Peru's legislators were elected to represent geographic districts rather than the country as a whole. To ensure that the new Congress acted as an effective check to the executive branch and met demands for constituent service, OTI supported the training of legislators and their staff on methods and procedures for oversight, accountability, and constituent relations. At the same time, OTI sponsored national and local information campaigns about the role and functions of congress, and supported activities such as public hearings and town hall meetings to facilitate congressional responsiveness to the electorate.

Combating Corruption

In light of the bribery scandal that led to the fall of the Fujimori government, fighting corruption was high on the minds of average Peruvians. OTI therefore supported local and national initia-

tives to monitor the allocation and management of public resources and report on abuse. OTI activities have included technical workshops and training events for policymakers, information campaigns for citizens, diagnostic surveys, national and international conferences and seminars, and the establishment of local networks to investigate and publicize instances of malfeasance. ■



In Peru, OTI supported a series of anticorruption fairs across the country.

Decentralization and the Regional Elections

Under the Fujimori administration, Peru earned a reputation as one of Latin America's most centralized bureaucracies. Decentralization has been a critical transition priority, beginning with the interim government and continuing under President Alejandro Toledo's administration. However, for decentralization to work, local governments must have the information, skills, and resources to manage their new responsibilities.

To support a policy process for decentralization, OTI funded activities such as public hearings and debates in all of Peru's regions. OTI also funded onsite training, technical assistance, workshops, and seminars for mayors, policymakers, and civil society leaders. Participants in meetings discussed the relevance of self-governance in the region, analyzed the legal framework for decentralization, debated alternatives for local development, and agreed to create permanent civic committees to coordinate future activities. These initiatives helped build the capacity of municipalities to assume management of public policy in a transparent and accountable manner.

OTI also worked to ensure that citizens understood the implications of the new decentralization framework. In coordination with the executive branch's decentralization office, OTI supported a national information campaign consisting of television and radio spots on decentralization. These high-profile educational segments produced by local NGOs were supplemented by radio campaigns in several languages developed for community radio networks.

New ethics legislation proposed in Congress

October

OTI sponsors workshops on experiences in other countries

New decentralization law signed

July

OTI supports training of local authorities

Congress restructures Defense Ministry with more civilians at top levels

October

OTI provides assistance to Congress and NGOs to ensure oversight

2002

SERBIA-MONTENEGRO

Program Facts

Duration: Jul 97–Nov 02

FY2002 Budget: \$8.5 million

FY2001 Budget: \$10.7 million

Objectives: Promote government reform and responsiveness; improve understanding of government reforms; expand knowledge of human rights and truth and reconciliation efforts; support transparent and participatory electoral processes

Partners: Creative Associates International, Inc.

Background

OTI began its Serbia and Montenegro program in July 1997—after the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but before Yugoslavia unleashed its military campaign against separatists in Kosovo. Recognizing the potential for further ethnic violence, OTI's initial effort aimed at curbing hardline attitudes and perceptions, maximizing the availability of objective information, and promoting peaceful democratic change throughout the country.

Former President Slobodan Milosevic's policies of stirring ethnic hatred nonetheless persisted. In March 1999, following Serbia's assault on Kosovo and failure to submit to the terms of the Rambouillet Accords, NATO forces began air strikes that lasted until mid-June. During the NATO intervention, OTI evacuated its Belgrade and Nis offices, but the Podgorica office remained open.

Operating from outside the country, OTI continued to provide direct, high-impact support to politically active civic groups, independent media, and democratically oriented municipalities and political parties. By helping to organize get-out-the-vote efforts, an independent parallel vote count, and other activities to offset the massive ballot rigging and voter fraud anticipated in the November 2000 elections, OTI enabled talented and creative young activists to challenge the official tally and ultimately force Milosevic from office.



In Serbia, OTI sponsored public information campaigns to encourage citizens to combat corruption.

Following Milosevic's ouster in October 2000, OTI moved quickly to capitalize on the new democratic opening. From its offices in Belgrade, Nis, Kragujevac, and Podgorica, OTI supported projects designed to consolidate recent gains, moderate regional and ethnic tensions, and increase the pace of reform. Special focus areas included the judiciary, the economy, local self-governance, electoral systems, anticorruption, human rights, and minority rights. From October 2000 until October 2002, OTI approved 631 grants worth more than \$14 million.

Activities

Financing Community Improvements

Community Impact Projects (CIPs) constituted the bulk of OTI programming in 2001, helping both to consolidate the democratic transition and address the crisis in southern Serbia. The CIP methodology empowered local commu-

September
elections called

Milosevic ousted

Parliamentary elections
held

Presevo Valley conflict
intensifies

August

OTI aids opposition
activist groups

October

December

OTI supports local
media and civic groups

January

OTI begins confidence-
building measures in
Presevo Valley

March

OTI supports NGO campaign
to arrest Milosevic

2000

2001

“OTI was crucial in making contributions (financial and ideas) on a wider front—bringing together NGOs, media groups, political parties, and small projects that would have never survived otherwise.”

Veran Matic
Editor in Chief, Radio B-92, Belgrade

nities by involving them in decisionmaking. Projects also provided tangible humanitarian and infrastructure benefits, including rehabilitation of schools and health clinics, repair of electrical and water systems, and rebuilding of roads. Citizens and officials worked together to identify priority needs through a series of townhall meetings, while OTI contributed in-kind funding.

Increasing the Pace of Reform

Taking advantage of long-term partnerships with local media vendors and politically active NGOs, OTI helped improve the quality and quantity of public information about reform efforts. OTI funded integrated media and NGO campaigns for five key reform sectors, boosting the impact of calls for change by explaining the process and encouraging broad public involvement. One slogan—“The Future is Europe”—unified the various reforms into an overarching vision of a new direction for the country.

Protecting Minority Rights

To promote national reconciliation, OTI

Resolving Conflict in Southern Serbia

Twenty years of near-total political and economic neglect of Serbia’s Presevo Valley, coupled with the nationalist rhetoric of the 1990s, created intense distrust of Serbian government authorities and general intolerance between the Serbian and Albanian communities. Albanian insurgents launched frequent attacks on the Yugoslav police and military, with the stated goal of separating the Presevo Valley from Serbia and joining it to Kosovo. In January 2001, as concerns rose about the possibility of yet another Balkan war, OTI was asked by the U.S. Embassy to develop a conflict mitigation strategy for the ethnically mixed municipalities of Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac in Southern Serbia. OTI quickly set about devising confidence-building measures (CBMs) to address local Albanian grievances over resource allocation, past governmental discrimination, and human rights abuses.

OTI provided targeted assistance for community identified priorities such as health, human rights, media, education, village infrastructure, and public services. OTI recognized that preventing further violence would require reducing the influence of insurgent groups and divisive propaganda while promoting moderate leaders at the local, municipal, and regional levels who were committed to a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

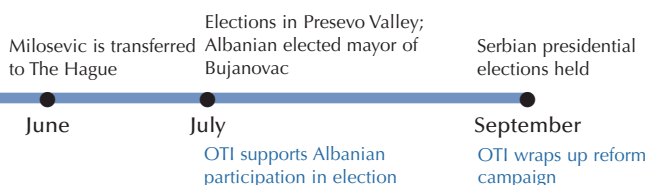
OTI rapidly identified an initial group of quick-impact grants that could be implemented in cooperation with local government agencies, thereby establishing constructive relationships and building faith in democratic change. As the crisis abated, OTI was able to expand on its initial projects by developing additional CBMs using a more consultative community development approach.

supported a number of projects designed to increase understanding of human rights, expand investigation and discussion of past war crimes, and include minorities in political decisionmaking. As part of this campaign, OTI funded a series of roundtable discussions that brought together republic and federal ministry officials, representatives of

minority groups, and civil society organizations to address problems encountered by minorities.

Promoting Issue-Based Elections

The 2002 presidential election was the first time that Serbia’s citizens had a real choice between two or more candidates. During this and previous elections, OTI supported activities that focused candidates’ and voters’ attention on specific reform issues. It also supported efforts to get out the vote, particularly those directed at mobilizing youth and minority populations. ■



SIERRA LEONE

Program Facts

Duration: Jan 97–Mar 02

FY2002 Budget: 1.2 million

FY2001 Budget: 5.2 million

Objectives: Reintegrate ex-combatants and war-affected youth; facilitate free and fair elections; build public support for demobilization, reconciliation, and reintegration; support local peacebuilding initiatives; enable effective control and monitoring of conflict diamonds

Partners: Management Systems International; World Vision; Search for Common Ground; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs; Christian Children's Fund

Background

Sierra Leone's brutal civil war raged for a full decade, beginning in 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched its first incursion from Liberia. A democratically elected president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, was deposed in mid-1997 but later reinstated by Nigerian-led forces. In 1999, Kabbah and RUF leader Foday Sankoh signed the Lome Peace Agreement, but fighting soon resumed. In 2001, with the deployment of a substantial UN peacekeeping force, there was a significant reduction in hostilities and the RUF began to disband.

OTI initiated its program in Sierra Leone in early 1997. The objective was to help address the root causes of conflict by involving Sierra Leone's civil society in peacebuilding initiatives. OTI's engagement was suspended in June 1997, following the coup, and resumed after the reinstatement of the constitutional government in 1998. In 1999, OTI fielded civil society observers and a technical support team to the Lome peace negotiations and provided small grants to civil society organizations to reinforce the results of the Lome Accord.

OTI later retargeted its program to reflect new political and social conditions. During 2001 and 2002, the goal of OTI's program in Sierra Leone was to help end the war and support reconciliation and reintegration.

"The YRTEP message has gotten into the hearts and minds of community members and has created a dynamic spirit that has motivated [all] ... to preach reconciliation and peace."

Independent evaluation of OTI Program in Sierra Leone by CARE and Creative Associates International, Inc.

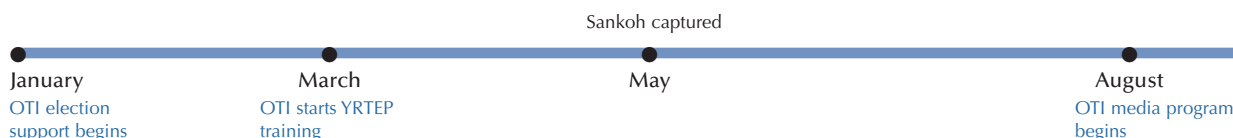
Activities

Reintegrating Ex-Combatants and War-Affected Youth

OTI's Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YRTEP) program created a nationwide, nonformal, and remedial education network for ex- and noncombatant young adults, many of whom had not attended school for nearly 10 years. From March 2000 until the close of OTI's program, 46,480 individuals participated at over 2,000 sites, developing new skills and attitudes that would enable them to lead peaceful and productive lives. During the year-long training, YRTEP participants gained literacy and math skills while learning about self-reliance, conflict resolution, agriculture, health, and civic participation. The program was quickly broadened to include a second track designed for public and private sector leaders.

Expanding Employment Opportunities

OTI's Skills Training and Employment Promotion (STEP) and its Skills Training and Employment Generation (STEG)



2000



A learning circle meets in York, Sierra Leone.

programs built on the gains of YRTEP. OTI supported a program to provide job skills and generate employment for those who had completed the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration process. The program strengthened life skills, promoted social reintegration, created temporary employment, and stimulated cooperation between ex-combatants and community members.

Promoting Entrepreneurship

OTI supported a series of intensive two-week workshops with participants from throughout the country to foster self-reliance and economic development through assimilation of improved business practices.

Improving Monitoring of the Diamond Trade

To address the problem of “conflict diamonds,” OTI coordinated with the Government of Sierra Leone to implement initiatives to improve regulation and oversight of the diamond mining industry and manage disbursement of export tax revenues generated from legal mining. OTI helped identify strategies

From Traitor to Trainer: A Rebel’s Transformation

A.K. made a tough decision when he decided to break ranks with his unit and disarm. He had heard the president announce on the radio that rebels would not be harmed if they handed in their weapons, but his comrades told him it was disinformation. He decided to try anyway, and secretly traveled with his wife and daughter to a demobilization camp. Upon arrival, he learned that OTI’s YRTEP program was interviewing ex-combatants to become “learning facilitators,” who would be paid a small stipend to teach reading, writing, and basic life skills to other ex-combatants and war-affected youth. After being discharged from the camp, A.K. was accepted into the training program. He signed up for a computer learning course in Bo, where he also began his assignment, teaching a class one or two evenings a week. He expressed gratitude to YRTEP for helping him to make sound decisions about his future. In the jungle, he said, the only way to survive had been through aggression. He renounced that behavior, thanks to the program, and found that being polite and calm helped him progress. He said that his colleagues at the computer center knew of his past but accepted him because of his gentle manner. He even developed close friendships with ex-combatants from rival factions, and has encouraged them to participate in YRTEP.

“Impact Evaluation of the Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Program,” Management Systems International (MSI), August 2001.

to improve the chain of custody for diamonds and better enable the detection and investigation of illegal mining activity. OTI also supported civil society groups in their efforts to equitably distribute diamond revenues and use them for community development.

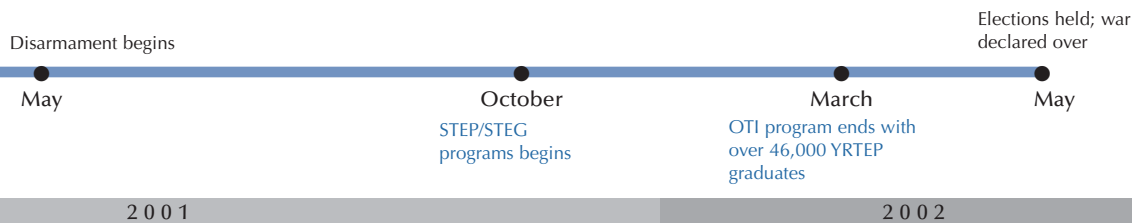
Advancing Peace through the Media

In cooperation with Talking Drum Studios, OTI supported the dissemination of information to encourage peace, reconciliation, and informed participation in public affairs. Equipment, technical assistance, and program support were

provided to broadcasters, enabling innovative programs to be aired on all major radio stations across the country.

Supporting the Electoral Process

Together with other donors, OTI supported a nationwide election awareness and recruitment drive that focused on increasing the participation of women and youth. To promote involvement of young people, OTI helped train a coalition of 25 youth groups as election monitors, and assisted the production and distribution of over 1,000 audio-cassettes with election sensitization messages. ■



VENEZUELA

Program Facts

Duration: Aug 02–Sep 04

FY2002 Budget: \$2.5 million

Objectives: Enhance dialogue; strengthen democratic institutions; encourage peaceful crisis resolution

Partners: Development Alternatives, Inc., Conflict Management Group

Background

Promising social revolution in an oil-rich country plagued by widespread poverty, Hugo Chávez was first elected president of Venezuela in 1998. Despite his embrace of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, Chávez was reelected by a comfortable margin in 2000. He moved quickly to consolidate power in the executive branch but alienated the country's political and economic elite. In April 2002, following a general strike that erupted into violence, Chávez was removed from power, but the interim government quickly collapsed and he returned to office. The episode severely polarized the Venezuelan population.

After Chávez's reinstatement, the national government responded aggressively to the opposition's confrontational approach of strikes and demonstrations. Calls for the president's resignation and early elections were dismissed by government negotiators as unconstitutional. Attempts to foster dialogue to resolve the crisis have been unsuccessful, and continued erosion of democratic institutions and processes raises serious concerns for Venezuela.

The United States has an abiding interest in ensuring that Venezuela's democracy endures and strengthens. In August 2002, as the political situation began to deteriorate and prospects for a quick solution diminished, OTI established a program to protect the democratic

"I asked the USAID to offer its financial and human resources, its skills and experience with similar activities ... with the goal of supporting our ongoing efforts in Venezuela. Within USAID, there is an office that has significant experience in this area ... the Office of Transition Initiatives."

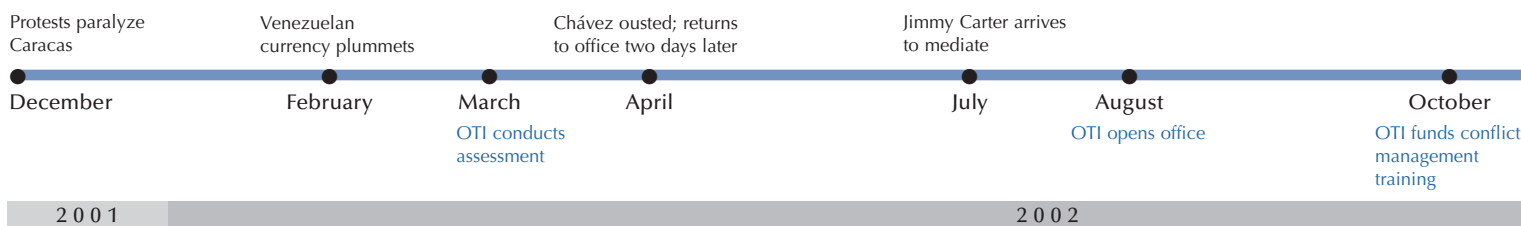
*U.S. Ambassador Charles S. Shapiro
"La 'Oficina' de Estados Unidos,"
El Nacional,
August 11, 2002*

process and encourage national reconciliation. Called the Venezuela Confidence Building Initiative, OTI's program works to achieve program objectives through small grants to enhance dialogue, strengthen democratic institutions, and furnish technical advice and expertise. By providing critical and timely assistance to defuse the crisis, OTI seeks to mitigate the potential for violence and repression.

Activities

Facilitating Dialogue

Working with government officials and civil society organizations, OTI supports new avenues of dialogue in order to lower tensions among groups and bridge divisions among the population. OTI not only expanded opportunities for government and opposition forces to meet at the bargaining table, but helped them identify common interests and provided



new skills for managing disputes. In a situation where political sensitivities have made both sides reluctant to talk, formal and informal events that bring the various groups together have enabled improved understanding and created new openings for the exchange of ideas.

Strengthening Democratic Processes

By funding training, information, and improved communications, OTI assisted governmental institutions, including the National Assembly, citizens' ombudsmen, and local mayors, to increase transparency and better respond to constituent needs. Through roundtables and conferences, OTI enhanced officials' abilities to function as service providers and public stewards, and deepened their appreciation for the role of the media in a democratic society. To ensure accountability on all sides, OTI also funded journalist training to promote balanced coverage of events and responsible reporting practices.

Building Mediation Skills

To support the work of the Tripartite Working Group—the OAS, the UNDP, and the Carter Center—OTI sponsored workshops on mediation and negotiation techniques for government and opposition representatives involved in the national dialogue. Facilitated by the Conflict Management Group, the workshops provided decisionmakers and opinion leaders on both sides of the political divide with enhanced negotiat-

Managing Conflict through Dialogue

A key objective of the OTI program in Venezuela has been to promote dialogue between the Government of Venezuela and opposition groups. In mid-October 2002, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), César Gaviria, initiated direct talks between the two sides known as the Negotiations and Agreements Table.

When talks stalled in November and the threat of an opposition general strike mounted, OTI, in close collaboration with the U.S. Embassy, called in Jim Tull of the Conflict Management Group (CMG), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to spread negotiation and other skills that promote peace.



In Venezuela, OTI supported a conflict resolution workshop for representatives of civil society and the media.

CMG and two Venezuelan organizations designed a flexible program to work with the key players on both sides. The OAS-facilitated talks included direct meetings with civil society groups, the Venezuelan Chamber of Commerce, and 19 government and opposition members of the National Assembly known collectively as the Boston Group. With OTI and CMG's encouragement and assistance, the Boston Group organized themselves into a forum for generating ideas to bring about a peaceful resolution to the political crisis. OTI separately funded the publication of their communiqué in the leading Venezuelan newspapers, one that describes their intention to work for a peaceful and democratic solution.

ing skills and improved their ability to identify areas of agreement. A future phase of the project, to be conducted by a Venezuelan NGO, will enable participants to better analyze the political crisis from all sides, define their positions within it, and identify acceptable ways of achieving its resolution. ■

Boston Group issues
communiqué

December

OTI provides
funding to publish
communiqué



Office of Transition Initiatives

Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance

U.S. Agency for International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 2.9B

Washington, DC 20523-8602

202-712-0730

FAX: 202-216-3406

usaid.gov/hum_response/oti

PD-ABX-946